



# SERMONS,

BY

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*One of the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church.*

*FIRST SERIES.*

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**Rev. H. G. LICH,**

CINCINNATI:  
PUBLISHED BY POE & HITCHCOCK.

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R. P. THOMPSON, PRINTER.  
1868.

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1868,

BY POE & HITCHCOCK,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the  
Southern District of Ohio.

## P R E F A C E .

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**A**T different times during the past ten years, the author has been solicited to give to the public a volume of sermons. Hoping to gratify his friends, serve the cause of Christ, and to leave a voice whose utterances shall not die with himself, he has made a selection from his sermons, and embodied them in this volume.

A few of them were prepared for special occasions, and written before delivery; but for the most part they have *grown up* in the hands of the author. Delivered at first from brief notes, they were afterward modified to adapt them to the occasions of their use, or improve their general character, till at last they were developed into their present state.

Three or four of them had been published before in pamphlets; but the author was desired to put them in this more enduring form. The publication of some of the others had been requested—as that on “Methodism” by the Wisconsin Conference—but



till now it has not been found practicable to grant the request.

Each sermon had its distinct purpose and mission in its original delivery. And in their revision for the press, the author has not attempted to give them a more general application at the expense of their original specific design. This volume, then, does not aim at any thing like a systematic presentation of the great doctrines of the Christian faith, nor of the great duties of the Christian life. But it does aim to give a clear presentation and an earnest enforcement of each topic of Christian faith and life discussed.

With this practical aim constantly in view, the author may not have been careful at all points of a faultless rhetoric. This has really been the least of his concern, though he does not underestimate the value of this burnisher, nor has he spared its use. He has also been more studious to give clear and correct rather than new or novel enunciations of truth, though both the thoughts and the mode of presentation seem to him to be his own. These thoughts are not expressed with any design to evade or disarm criticism, but that the whole matter may be fully and frankly stated.

In every case the reader will, we think, give the author the credit of a rigid adherence to the subject in hand, and that its elucidation and application are

steadily sought in every part. We think also that method and order will not be found wanting in any of the discussions. Nor can the author doubt that his choice of a free and manly diction rather than one of affected nicety or precision, will receive the earnest approval of his readers. But, while, on the one hand, he has utterly discarded pompous or pretentious diction, on the other he has held all low, mean, *cant* phrases—however much they might appeal to popular taste—to be unworthy of the sacred themes of the pulpit, as they are of the place itself. But clear exposition, earnest exhortation, pathetic appeal, appropriate illustration—embodying as they do the great elements of effective preaching—are not wanting, we trust, in these discourses.

The volume, such as it is—such as it has sprung from the thought and heart of the author—such as its parts have grown to be in the lapse of years—is now sent forth upon its mission. We bespeak for it the kind consideration of the public. May the reader find in it a benediction for the intellect as well as the heart!

An apology is due to the public, and especially to the Publishers, for the delay of publication so long after the announcement of the work, and, indeed, so long after it had been in type. The author has been so occupied and pressed with duties and cares, mainly

official, that it was utterly impossible for him at an earlier date to complete the reading of the proofs, kindly furnished from the stereotype plates by the Publishers for this purpose.

We can but hope that these sermons may, with the blessing of God, in all coming time, continue to realize the objects sought, first in their composition and delivery, and now in their publication.

FEBRUARY 25, 1868.

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# SERMONS.



## I.

### METHODISM—A DIVINE INSTAURATION.

A CENTENARY DISCOURSE.

*"According to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought!"* Numbers xxiii, 23.

*"Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."* Zechariah iv, 6.

THE General Conference of 1864, remembering that the year 1866 would close the first century of Methodism in America, resolved that it should be made a memorial year in the Church. And to this end all within the pale of her communion, and all who have shared in the heavenly benedictions through her instrumentality, were invited to assist in making memorable this Centennial year. They were called upon not only to erect monuments of gratitude, but also, by the holy exercises of faith and prayer, to kindle anew upon all her altars the sacred flame that glowed upon them with so much light and warmth in the olden time.

It is fitting, beloved friends, that it should be celebrated by us and our children. It is fitting that we

should call to mind the way the Lord our God hath led us, and recount the wonderful things he hath done for us. Such a review will lead us to say of Methodism, as it was once said of Jacob and of Israel, "What hath God wrought!" At the same time a deeper and more careful study of the philosophy of the movement—the hidden element of power that has been the glory and the success of Methodism—will lead us to exclaim with the prophet, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts!"

We are called, then, to a review of Methodism—its spirit, mission, and work. Not for the gratification of denominational pride, nor yet in the spirit of self-glorying, but with devout gratitude to God who has bestowed so great blessings upon us, and made us, as a Church, the instrument of such great blessings to the race. Especially should we endeavor to ascertain what were the peculiar elements that gave to the Methodistic movement its wonderful power and efficiency in its early development. Thus may we learn how this movement may be guarded and strengthened, and sent onward to achieve its mission in the coming time.

1. *Methodism was a revival of genuine Christianity such as has rarely occurred in the history of the Church.*

The Christian Church commenced its aggressive movement in a pentecostal baptism of the Spirit of God sent down upon the wondering disciples, arming them with unwonted power, and filling the minds of the multitudes with astonishment at the rich display of heavenly grace. And from that time till the

present true religion has made its advancement in the world, not by a progress uniform and equable, but by revolution and reformation. As we look back along the lapse of centuries, our eye is, here and there, arrested by the wonderful manifestations of spiritual light and spiritual warmth which burst upon the world in times of darkness and spiritual declension. They filled the minds of men with wonder; they awoke multitudes from the lethargy of spiritual death to the life that is immortal; they lifted up the great heart of the Church into a purer life, opened new and brighter visions to her faith, and led her forth into broader fields of toil and success; they are the great headlands in the history of the Church, marking the successive stages of her progress in the earth. Such an era was the founding of Methodism.

It is remarkable that these revolutions in the spiritual life of the Church never repeat themselves. In one respect or another each differs from all its predecessors. The prominent agencies are different, the forms of manifestation are unlike, or the intensity and effectiveness of the forces called into action, the breadth of the field and the permanency of the results, mark differences in each. Luther's Reformation was a warfare against the false dogmas and the corruptions of the Papal Church. Puritanism was a protest against that corruption of Christianity which had substituted form and ceremony, and artistic and architectural beauty for the true spirit of Christianity itself. The protest was right. But Puritanism, rushing to the opposite extreme, developed a religion so ascetic as to be repulsive. The despoiling of churches of



their architectural beauty, the long face, the longer prayer, the somber tone, the harsh, unlovely, and unloving spirit, had nothing in it that could attract the heart. Yet its stern adhesion to principle, and its rigid exaction of obedience to what it conceived to be truth, will ever command the respect of thoughtful men. The Wesleyan Reformation was unlike either of these. The element of Christianity upon which it took firmest hold is that which is most vital to the Christian life, nearest to the heart of Christianity itself—the spiritual regeneration of the souls of men, and thus bringing them personally and spiritually into union with Christ. It was a holy wrestling to bring fire from heaven, that the dross of sin might be burned away, the believer filled with all the fullness of an indwelling God, and the Church, robed in the purity of heaven, instinct with spiritual light and power, might go forth on her true mission—the subjugation of the world to the dominion of Christ. Methodism, like Christianity itself, started out with the world for its field; Scriptural holiness, every-where and in all men, for its end.

2. Another thing that gives prominence to the Methodistic revival, is, that *it came when vital piety had almost died out in the ministry as well as in the membership of the professing Christian Churches*. It came when irreligion, infidelity, and universal depravation of morals were threatening to uproot the very semblance of Christianity from the land. The testimony upon this point is fearfully strong. We need not rely upon the testimony of Wesley and of those who labored with him. Outside of his associates, and

among the antagonists of his movement even, witnesses are innumerable; and the testimony, often unconsciously given, is clear and explicit. Bishop Butler, in 1736, speaking of the age, says: "It has come to be taken for granted that Christianity is now at length discovered to be fictitious; and that nothing remains but to set it up as a principal subject for mirth or ridicule, as it were by way of reprisals, for its having so long interrupted the pleasures of the world." In 1751, in his charge to his clergy, he says: "It is impossible for me to forbear lamenting with you *the general decay of religion in this nation*;" and then speaks of it as having "been for some time the complaint of all serious persons." Archbishop Secker, after commenting in strong terms upon the dissoluteness of the age, adds, "Christianity is ridiculed and railed at with very little reserve, and *the teachers* of it without any at all." Dr. Watts declares that this decay of vital religion and of virtue was as common among the Dissenters as in the Established Church; and beseeches all Christians to put forth every possible effort "for the recovery of dying religion in the world." And Isaac Taylor, himself a Non-Conformist, not only says, in his Wesley and Methodism, that "the people of England had lapsed into heathenism, or a state hardly to be distinguished from it" at the time of the Methodistic revival; but he also admits that Methodism "*preserved from extinction and reanimated* the languishing Non-Conformity" of that time.

The clergy, too, of that period, were, to a great extent, ignorant, irreligious, and not a few of them

dissolute in life and manners. Bishop Burnet says: "The much greater part of those who come to be ordained are ignorant to a degree not to be apprehended by those who are not obliged to know it." He adds that "those who have read some few books, yet never seem to have read the Scriptures." Indeed, so far had the ministry sunk below its proper function and character that Southey declares it had lost even "*the appearance of respect*" among men. In this state of things, the Church formed no bulwark for the defense of the truth; it was in fact, as Archbishop Leighton described it, "a fair carcass without a spirit." The undertone of sentiment throughout Christendom was infidel. The religion of Nature was every-where supplanting the religion of Revelation in the circles of intelligence and thought; and among the common people, all religion was discarded, the very forms of virtue despised, and the whole mass sunk down deeper and still deeper in brutality and vice. What hope was there now for Christianity or the world? All existing agencies had failed; their power was broken; the ever-increasing torrent of wickedness rolled on unchecked, threatening to overspread the whole earth, and blot out the very semblance of piety from among men.

At this auspicious moment, the Wesleyan Reformation began. It came not in the form of subtile argument, but of convincing power. It appealed to the guilty consciousness of men. It made them feel that God, and truth, and righteousness, and heaven, and hell were solemn realities. Its utterances were made with the presence and power of God. Sinful

men, disturbed in their unbelief and their sins, first sought to silence, by violence, the voice that reproved them ; but God was in the utterances of that voice, and neither the wickedness nor the violence of men could stay its power. The slumbering conscience of the nation awoke ; the dying branches of the Christian Church felt the pulsings of a new spiritual life, and was aroused from the long lethargy of their spiritual death to a new and unaccustomed activity. Missionary and Bible societies were organized. Christianity assumed the offensive ; and ever since has been pushing forward her work into all parts of the world. Thus, Methodism became a vitalizing power in the Christian Church, constituting a new era in her progress—an era that shall, through all time, stand out as one of the great headlands, marking the advancement of Christianity in her great mission, the redemption of the race.

3. *The Providential origin and shaping of Methodism is also noticeable in this connection.*

Providence is every-where writing its record in the history of the world, and especially of the Church. The infant Moses, left to float in his ark of bulrushes upon the Nile, was not more distinctly the child of Providence, preserved and raised up for his great work, than was the infant child of the Epworth rectory ; whose training there, and in subsequent years, was an unconscious preparation for his world-wide mission. Did that noblest of women—the mother of the Wesleys—in all the long years of her disciplining and training of her sons, have any pre-sentiment of the arduous life of toil and of immeas-

urable success for which she was preparing them? Even when she received the one from the flames—"a brand plucked from the burning"—did it ever flash upon her thoughts—the nature of the mission to which God had called him, and the grandeur and glory of the fruit to be gathered from such a lengthened life of toil? And yet, God so directed the training, even from infant years, that it could not have led more directly to the result, had the end been clearly seen from the beginning.

Look at the little club of students at Oxford—fasting, praying, practicing self-denials; devoting the hours of recreation to acts of Christian beneficence and labor among the poor and suffering; devoting the hours allotted to rest to sacred studies and holy communings that they might come to a better acquaintance with the things of God, and a fuller conformity to the Christian character and life. The jeers and jibes of college associates move them not; the opprobrious epithet of "Methodist" stings upon the ear, but has no power to swerve the heart. Who in all that little band had the least conception of the grand work for which God was even then training them? Who among them dreamed that their combined efforts were yet to arouse dormant Christendom, and set in motion a religious revolution whose mighty sweep should reach the remotest parts of the earth; and whose active, energetic life should be bounded only by time? *They* thought only to nurture their own souls in the divine life; *God* had higher purposes. He intended to make them the instruments of salvation to uncounted multitudes in

all lands and through all time. With these modest and despised young men, he will thrash mountains! He will overturn ecclesiastical dynasties, and renovate the life of the whole Church!

If Providence thus strongly marked the beginning of the Methodistic revival, it is equally manifest in all the stages of its subsequent development. Mr. Wesley, thrown among the Moravians in a storm upon the ocean, first realized the Divine reality of *experimental* religion; and thus through their instrumentality is he taught the way of faith. Excluded from the Churches, not because of heresy in doctrine, but because of the zeal and power with which they preached the doctrines recognized in the Homilies and Articles of Faith of the Church of England, Whitefield first led the way into the open fields, and the Wesleys soon followed, preaching to gathered thousands and tens of thousands that might never have entered a church. And here, in the open air, upon Kennington Common, at Moorfields, Kingswood, in the magnificent amphitheater of Gwenap, and in other places, the eloquence of these gifted men reached the sublimity of its power. The uncounted multitudes were swayed before it as trees are swayed by the mighty tempest. They cried aloud for salvation, fell to the earth in their agony of soul, but soon arose again, renewed in the image of Christ, and shouting aloud the praises of God. Nor was this all. Excluded from the churches of "the Establishment," churches for themselves became a necessity, and they sprang up, first in Bristol, then in London, and then all over the country. This was the first development

of the organic life of Methodism. It was literally forced upon the great leaders ; nor did they even then have the remotest conception of the magnitude of the results that were to spring from the measure.

It was about this time—1739—that eight or ten persons came to Mr. Wesley desiring him to “spend some time with them in prayer, and advise them how to flee from the wrath to come.” The meeting was simple and unpretending. The leader only thought to guide a few simple-hearted disciples in the way to heaven ; but here was the germ of the class meeting, which has proved a school of moral and spiritual nurture as well as a common bond of unity in the Church in all the successive years of Methodism.

Mr. Wesley is standing almost alone. Societies are multiplying in every part of the kingdom, and loudly call for the ministry of the Word. He is “ready to faint.” There is “not a clergyman willing to help him.” It had never entered into his thoughts that a man might preach without a university education or an episcopal ordination. No wonder he was “ready to faint.” The sheep of the flock were scattered abroad upon the mountains with no shepherd to lead them. Just then the news reaches him, as he moves forward in his ceaseless, tireless rounds, that Thomas Maxfield, a lay-helper, has commenced preaching in London. Shocked at such an innovation upon order and propriety, he hastens to London, that he may at once and forever silence the presumptuous layman, and put a stop to such an irregularity before it should gain foothold in his societies. Here his noble mother, not less respectful of Church order

than himself, confronts him. "John," said she, "take care what you do with respect to that young man, for he is as surely called of God to preach as you are. Examine what have been the fruits of his preaching, and hear also yourself." Wesley heard, was convinced, and lay preaching—"without which," as Isaac Taylor says, "there could have been no Methodism"—became one of the mighty agencies of the Methodist revival, both in England and America. This was the last antagonistic impulse that separated Methodism forever from the Established Church, and left it untrammelled to carry forward the great mission God had given it. Thomas Maxfield was the forerunner of such men as Nelson, and Olivers, and Walsh, and Ouseley, and others—a thundering legion—who, braving untold perils from devils and from men, went forth winning victories for the Cross everywhere.

Call this, if you please, an inroad upon Church order, a contempt of authority; call it the inauguration of confusion or of fanaticism, when tested by the prim order of Church forms and rules. It matters not. There is a time when that crystallized order that imprisons the soul and fetters the truth must be shattered, that the world may have light and salvation. Isaac Taylor says: "It is manifest that unless, once and again, order had given way to a higher necessity, the Gospel must by this time have lain deep buried beneath the corrupt accumulations of eighteen hundred years. How think we would it have been held in its brightness and purity by those who, idolizing ancient rules and modes, become petrified around the



altar where they kneel? It is to minds of a very different mold that the commission is given to restore what has fallen, and to build again the waste places, and to *re-create order by means of an hour of confusion.*" Such a mind was that of Wesley—Providentially led at every step; and Methodism, in its organic life, stands forth the very embodiment of law and order. Its infractions were only against those lifeless forms by which the Gospel was bound. But the Rubicon once crossed, the lay ministry multiplied and spread every-where. The people recognized it as from God, and to-day it stands forth acknowledged as one of the most efficient instrumentalities in the rise and spread of Methodism.

An itinerant ministry seems to have sprung naturally from the very genius and spirit of the Methodist movement. The Wesleys and Whitefield were itinerants in the broadest sense. Those who were enkindled with a like spirit, followed the example of the great leaders. Thus was necessitated the "Conference," which has become an institution of Methodism in all parts of the world. The first was held in 1744, and attended by only six persons, five of whom were clergymen. Thus was Methodism providentially led forth in its development. And John Wesley could, as truly as St. Paul, say, "I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." If Methodism had been of man or of man's device, it would long since have come to an end. A century has passed by; it still wears the vigor of youth. It is of God—heaven appointed. It can never die. Its moral forces shall

minge with those that do battle on the last field of spiritual conflict on earth. Its songs shall sound forth longest and loudest amid the joyful acclaims of humanity redeemed.

4. *The heroism and heroes of early Methodism may also arrest our attention and command our admiration.*

A revolutionary movement generally takes its rise in the bosoms of two or three individual men. These must be men marked for boldness of conception, fixedness of purpose, intensity of feeling, and a daring nearly akin to rashness in action. They must be inspired with the certain instinct of success that counts as little upon defeat as upon annihilation itself. Their heroism surpasses that of the soldier in arms. Ten thousand men may be found who will storm a battery in the very teeth of the enemy's leaden hail where one can be found to face the world's hatred and scorn in vindication of the great principles of right and truth. Thus Luther, Zuingli, Melancthon are the representative men of the earlier Reformation.

Methodism, too, furnishes her three heroes. There stands the peerless orator, whose unrivaled eloquence filled both hemispheres with wonder and delight, startled as with an electric shock the masses sunken in ignorance and sin, and won thousands to Christ. There, too, stands, with his singing robes wrapped around him, and the immortal wreath upon his brow, the poet, whose sacred melodies, second only to those of David, opened many a fountain of purity and blessedness in hearts that were before strangers to all that was good, and will continue to mingle in the songs of saintly worship till the end of time. And

then there comes, first as well as last, the master-spirit of the whole movement, the great legislator of Methodism, who 'compacted and conserved the rude and often discordant elements into one organic and harmonious whole, rearing a sublime temple that shall reëcho with the exalted praises of the living God till time shall be no more. Illustrious trio! you have fought your way through mobs and tumults, through trials and persecutions, through the ritualist's scorn and the world's dread apathy to the highest reverence of earth and the highest felicity of heaven. Sainted hero, sage, legislator, looking down upon all lands and beholding thy work still enlarging, thy people still multiplying, with subdued and holy fervor, thou mayest again and again repeat, "The best of all is, God is with us!" Immortal orator, amid the blaze of heavenly glory, thy voice may again be lifted up, thrilling angels as it once thrilled men, pouring forth over all the heavenly plains the eternal anthem of a sinner redeemed by the blood of Christ, and lifted up on high! Poet of the ages, no sanctuary of earth but reëchoes thy sacred melodies; no pilgrim ever reaches the Holy City but that has felt the inspiration of thy song; in thy "crowning hour," methinks the angels could find no more fitting language than thine own with which to welcome thee to the skies:

"Servant of God, well done!  
Thy glorious warfare's past;  
The battle's fought, the race is won,  
And thou art crowned at last."

But the Wesleys and Whitefield were only the types of an illustrious succession. There was Howel

Harris, the founder of Methodism in Wales; pelted with stones, with rotten eggs, with dead dogs; preached against in the parish churches as a minister of the devil; his assemblies disturbed by the hootings of drunken vagabonds set on by the parish ministers themselves; his voice drowned by the beating of drums and every kind of confusion Satan himself could invent; arrested as a disturber of the peace, tried and fined as a vagabond, imprisoned as a criminal! What short of the sublimest heroism could face all this? Yet in the midst of it all there was no faltering. His labor was almost unceasing. Where he could not meet the people by day on account of the mob, he would meet them at midnight or in the early morning—often not undressed for weeks together. Such was the origin of what is now the most numerous Christian body in Wales.

John Nelson, the stone-mason—who has not heard of him? Possessed of little education, but a man of strong, manly sense, of ready and pungent wit, of invincible firmness and resolution, and, above all, of deep and fervent piety. He faced death for the cause of his Master in a thousand forms. When forced from home and impressed into the army, he even there made Christianity resplendent. When thrust into prison his friends came and sang praises without, while he shouted within. Of the readiness of his wit and the fearlessness of his spirit, there are innumerable illustrations. On one occasion he was brought before one of the magistrates of Nottingham. That public functionary contemptuously exclaimed, "I wonder you can 't stay in your own places. You

might be convinced by this time that the mob of Nottingham will never let you preach quietly in this town." Nelson promptly responded, "I beg pardon, sir; I did not know before now that this town was governed by a mob, for most such towns are governed by magistrates."

Then, too, coming to men of a higher order, there was Coke, who soared on wings of fire; whose zeal no toil nor peril could abate; whose sympathies were as broad as the world. Three continents attest the breadth of his benevolence; and the ocean sounds his requiem from shore to shore. There, too, peerless, and in the vanguard of the advancing hosts of Methodism on the American continent, stands one whose life surpassed, if possible, that of the great Founder in its ceaseless and tireless activities; one whose very life-thought and image are incorporated into all the forms and measures of the largest and most thoroughly-compacted Methodist body on the globe. The swamps and the rivers, the wildernesses and the mountains, the savage Indians and the wild beasts of the forest, the longest reaches of distance and the most laborious modes of travel, were as nothing in his presence, while he moved on, ceaseless, tireless, in circuits that spanned half a continent. The historian of our country has passed him by without even recording his name; and yet no other man "has wrought more deeply into American life in its social, moral, and religious facts than he." Such was Francis Asbury, the Wesley of American Methodism. During a period of forty-five years, he traveled, mainly in sulky or on horseback,

270,000 miles, and preached 16,500 sermons. He presided at 225 Annual Conferences, and ordained over 4,000 preachers; and lived to see the Church grow up from 600 members and 10 preachers to a membership of 211,000 and 3,000 preachers. A heroic life; a heavenly result.

Where he left the work, others took it up; others, not less heroic, not less devoted. Their names may be unrecorded in the world's calendar of the good and great. But their work has left its lasting impress upon all the institutions of our land. No class of men have made greater sacrifices or performed more arduous labors for the cause of Christ. They will ever stand forth a bright example of heroic devotion. Their life-labor has stamped their age as one of the grandest epochs in the history of the world's redemption. The ministers of Jesus Christ who have entered into their labors, have reason to thank God that they are in the line of such a true and glorious apostolical succession.

5. And this brings us to another point of inquiry, *the effectiveness of the early Methodist preaching; and to what that effectiveness was owing.*

By the word effectiveness, we do not mean merely that the masses were moved, that individuals cried out in agony of soul under the sharp ministry of the Word, that they fell to the earth, swooned away; or, filled with overwhelming joy, shouted aloud the praises of a reconciled God. We mean more than this; we mean its effectiveness in turning men from vice; its effectiveness in winning converts to its own peculiar doctrines and usages; its effectiveness in

arresting the downward tendencies of a corrupt age, and turning the thoughts of men soberly and earnestly to the claims of religion ; in a word, its effectiveness in gathering a great multitude—high and low, rich and poor, learned and unlearned—who should love and serve God on earth, praise and glorify him in heaven.\*

But the question returns upon us, How shall we account for the effectiveness of the early Methodist ministrations? What were the elements of that effectiveness? Was it that the great leaders were men of classical attainments, polished speakers and gentlemen? that they were quickened and equipped by the highest forms of university culture? All this we may claim for them; but the hiding of their power was not here. For there were, in that very age, other ministers like them, and in some respects their superiors in classical attainments and in polished culture, and evangelical in doctrine also, whose preaching produced no such effects. And then, on the other hand, some of the most effective of these early Methodist preachers were men who, converted by the power of God, had sprung from the mechanic's shop or the counting-room into the pulpit.

Nor was it, I think, in any peculiarity of dialect, vehemence, or rudeness of expression, or eccentricity of manner. For these sudden and wonderful effects were the product of no one kind of preaching. They

\* Isaac Taylor says that "the general or average product of the Methodistic ministrations was such as has no parallel even in the most exciting moments of the Reformation; nor has it had any parallel in these modern times."

took place under the calm and finished logic of the elder Wesley as well as under the mighty torrent of the inimitable Whitefield. And while John Nelson rough-hewed the granite from the quarry, Thomas Olivers, by the melting power of heavenly fire, subdued and molded even the hardest heart. One form of power is that of the lightning, which rives the mountains and sends its reverberations out over all the land; another is seen in the rays of light and heat, coming so gently that their footfall does not even strike upon the ear, yet life and beauty spring up in their pathway every-where. The one was the thunder of a Benjamin Abbott, the other the seraphic eloquence of a Summerfield. They are unlike in character, unlike in immediate effects, but the source of their power is *one*.

Again, this effectiveness was not limited in its power to the lowest and most ignorant people, nor to those who had been unaccustomed to listen to the ministry of the Word. All the history of the time concurs in the testimony that the intelligent and educated were reached and affected as well, and often in the same manner, so far as different natures will admit, as the ignorant and degraded multitudes. It is true that Methodism aroused tens of thousands to a sense of divine things who had rarely heard a sermon or entered a church—heathens in a land nominally Christian—but its influence was not confined to such. A good authority outside of the Methodist communion says that “a wonderful uniformity marked the effect produced, *whether the subject was one who had listened to ten thousand sermons, or was*



*now hearing his first." In fact, "the two hearers stood almost undistinguished side by side."*

Nor, again, did this effectiveness result from the discovery of any new doctrine that had lain hidden from the foundation of Christianity. Doctrines, essentially the same as those embodied in the great Methodistic creed, had been preached here and there, and at different times, in Protestant pulpits from the time of the Reformation down. Mr. Wesley never regarded himself as departing from the doctrines of the Church of England as taught in the Articles of Faith and the Homilies. He unceasingly proclaimed his adherence to them. And then, too, doctrines of free-will, of universal redemption, of justification by faith, assurance or witness of the Spirit, and of entire sanctification or Christian perfection, crop out here and there among all the better class of English divines, both in the Established Church and among the Dissenters. The phenomenon, then, before us, demanding solution, is this: Doctrines, essentially the same as those embodied in the great Methodistic creed, had been preached, here and there, at different times, by pious and able men, in Protestant pulpits from the time of the Reformation, down without producing any such effects as those realized under the ministry of Wesley and his followers; what was it that now gave them their unwonted power?

A philosophic writer on Methodism puts this point in a still stronger light than we have ventured to present it. He says, referring to the early Methodist preaching, that "it is patent and unquestionable that Protestant doctrine, proclaimed by men variously

gifted and qualified, did, through a course of years, and wherever carried, affect the minds of thousands of persons, not in the way of a transient excitement, but effectively and permanently. The very same things had been affirmed from year to year by able and sincere preachers in the hearing of congregations, assenting to all they heard, not, indeed, altogether without effect, yet with no such effect as that which ordinarily, if not invariably, attended the Methodist preaching. Nor, he adds, if we look beyond the pale of religious influence, had any previous ministrations of the same Protestant doctrines taken hold as this did, or in any remarkable manner, of *the untaught masses of the people, the non-attendants upon public worship, the heathen million that circulates every Sunday around churches and chapels.*"

Then, too, it must be borne in mind that there was not perfect agreement even upon many points of doctrine among preachers of the Methodist Reformation. Mr. Wesley often gently chided some of his most effective preachers for leaning too much to Calvinism, for failing to present the great doctrine of Christian perfection in all its fullness. And then, too, Whitefield, Howel Harris, and others went into the field incased with the iron armor and leaden weight of Calvinism, while Wesley and Fletcher proclaimed a free as well as full salvation.

I think, then, that we must say that the element of power in early Methodism was something above and beyond its doctrines—pure and blessed as they were. Indeed, I can conceive of these doctrines—all of them—being preached in the forms of the strictest

orthodoxy, and yet producing as little effect as the discharge of mere wadding from the cannon's mouth would have upon the batteries of the enemy.

But this is not saying that Methodism had no distinct doctrinal basis. Far from it. That basis was broad, distinct, and enduring; the freedom of the human will; the utter inability of man to atone for his own sins and to renew his own heart; a universal atonement; free grace for all the race; a present, full, and complete salvation—enjoyed in the heart, attested to the spirit, and filling the soul with joy unspeakable; the danger of apostasy and the duty of final perseverance; that salvation is placed by the grace of God within the reach of every soul of man; that every true believer may be made perfect in love in this life, and thus *stand perfect and complete in all the will of God, and be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*. These foundation-stones were compacted in the Methodist creed, and proclaimed in the Methodist preaching in burning words, such as had not before been uttered since the apostolic age. Without such a basis the old Methodistic preaching would have been powerless. It would have had no fulcrum on which to plant its lever; no hearth-stone on which to kindle its fire. God grant that the foundation may never be removed!

But while the old Methodistic preaching had its doctrinal basis, *it had also something more*. What was that? In my judgment, it was a Divine inspiration, like that received by the disciples on the day of Pentecost, enduring them with power for their great and glorious mission.

It seems to have been taken for granted that such a Divine energy can, in the nature of things, be only transitory, and must soon spend its force. But wherefore? Is not the Holy Spirit an abiding power in the Godhead? Are the dry formulas of doctrine more enduring than God? Have they more power than God? Nay, divest the purest doctrines of the accompanying energy of the Holy Ghost, and what are they but sapless vines that can produce no fruit? Whatever energy the Church has displayed in any age of the world and in any place, it has been by the quickening power of the Holy Ghost. And when that quickening power is lost, or just in such measure as it is lost, the Church becomes enfeebled in her spiritual life, and is compelled to fall back upon the human agencies with which she is possessed. Such agencies are valuable in themselves; they have accomplished much for humanity and for God; but they can never answer as a substitute for that Divine Spirit—the bequest of the blessed Redeemer to his disciples, and of higher moment to the Church than even His own personal presence.

Tell us not, then, that the Methodistic movement, because it was an inspiration from Heaven, must therefore be short-lived, limited to a few years in its duration, and then sink into comparative insignificance. Is God weary? Can the residue of the Spirit be exhausted? Nay, our faith may fail; the Church in consequence may become weak; but the Holy Spirit knows no weariness, no abatement of power! It is one of the most permanent and abiding agencies of salvation in the world! And the soul that grasps it,

any where and every-where, is filled with immortal light, and endowed with immortal power!

Then there was another element that gave effectiveness to the early Methodistic preaching. I may term it *its individualizing character*. In the dark ages of the Papal Church, there had sprung up what has been called “the *Church idea of Christianity*”—that is, the idea that placed *the Church* between *the individual* and his God. According to this hypothesis, all born within a certain circle belonged to the Church, were the property of the Church; and it was *her* business to set her seal upon them, and send them forward into the unseen world properly insured against the fires of hell. The individual had but little responsibility in the case. He looked not to God directly, but to the Church, which came between him and God.

This idea, begotten in Papal corruption, had survived the Reformation, and was now securely entrenched in the Church of England. The effect of it is the same in all ages, whether in the great overshadowing power of Rome, in the semi-political Church Establishment of England, or in the arrogant pretensions of its feeble representative in our own country. It renders vague and feeble the consciousness of our direct personal relationship to God; it obscures our sense of the direct relationship of God, the Father of spirits, to the individual spirit. God himself seems remote; and worship can be only formal—having little to do with the thought, the feeling, or the life.

Mr. Wesley and his coadjutors broke through all the hedges and trammels of this *Church idea*. His

message was to the *individual soul*. On the one hand was the sinner, standing out, naked, alone; on the other was God, at once the final Judge and the merciful Father. No other created beings in the Universe came between. "*Thou art the man*," fell upon the ear of the sinner, as the minister reasoned of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come. And then, when the *personal Redeemer* came to the *individual soul* with his message of forgiveness from heaven, there came forth the grateful acknowledgment of *personal* mercies received—"I love the Lord, because he hath heard *my* voice and *my* supplications"—"What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward *me*? *I* will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord!" How *individualizing* this work! The soul stands out alone with its God—occupying the attention of God, and calling forth the care of God, as though there were no other soul in all the Universe!

There is nothing like this individualizing process to wake up the dormant consciousness of the soul. There is no escape from it left to the sinner. God, and heaven, and hell become terrible realities to him. The decisions of eternity are pressed into a moment of space. Such a ministration can never fail of effect. In a greater or less degree, it has ever been the characteristic of Methodist preaching. May it remain so to the end of time!

The conclusion of the whole matter is, that Methodism was a new instauration of Christian faith and life sent from Heaven; that its agencies were of Divine appointment; that its spirit was an inspiration.

from God ; that its mission was world-wide ; and that its progressive work, as an agency in the world's redemption, is to move onward till the end of time. The great truths that have been quickened into new life by its agency, shall continue to swell the number of human souls from earth, washed by the blood of the Lamb, and made partakers of the heavenly glory.

The attempt to cast the horoscope of Methodism—to tell what it shall be in the ages of the future—by mere human reason, would be as vain as it is presumptuous. But we do know that the principles upon which it is founded, and the spirit that has inspired and directed its great master movements, are of God, and shall abide forever. May the Church never fail of the indwelling Presence! But on, and on, through the coming ages, may her light continue to glow with ever-increasing effulgence! May her sympathies, with all that love God and labor for the salvation of men, never cease to be as broad and catholic as they are heart-felt and sincere! In toil, and sacrifice, and earnest endeavor for the world's redemption, may she ever abound, standing foremost wherever battles are to be fought and conquests won for God! Just and generous to all Churches and to all Christians, may she be true to her own mission, and zealous in her own work! “And now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, who hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and establish you in every good word and work!” Amen.

## II.

## MISSION AND WORK OF AMERICAN METHODISM.

## A CENTENARY DISCOURSE.

*"Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem ; praise thy God, O Zion. For he hath strengthened the bars of thy gates ; he hath blessed thy children within. . He maketh peace in thy borders, and filleth thee with the finest of the wheat. He sendeth forth his commandment upon earth ; his word runneth very swiftly."* Psalm cxlviii, 12-15.

*"Give thanks unto the Lord ; make known his deeds among the people ; and remember his marvelous works that he hath done."* I Chron. xvi, 8, 12.

THE great events of our *individual life*—the events that have given a new and controlling current to our thoughts and feelings, brought us into new and important relationships, or elevated us into a higher and nobler life—all such are marked periods in our history. The time, the place, the circumstances are carefully written down in our memory. And as their anniversary comes around, it is a marked day—a day different from all the other days of the year. Such is the day of our birth, of our marriage, or of our conversion to God.

What the *years* are in the lifetime of an individual, the *centuries* are in the lifetime of a Church. And as these great periods come around, it is fitting



that the whole Church should mark them as of special interest ; fitting that Zion should break forth in praise and thanksgiving to God, who hath strengthened the bars of her gates, and blessed her children within ; fitting that she should look back and see with what efficiency and success her mission has been wrought ; and how swiftly God's Word has run through her agency ; and fitting, especially, that through the review of the past and the survey of the present, she should gather those lessons that will best equip her for the future.

To this end we propose to sum up some of the visible and tangible results of Methodism upon the American continent. We would "give thanks unto the Lord ; make known his deeds among the people ; and remember his marvelous works that he hath done."

#### I. GROWTH OF METHODISM.

Its growth is a marvel. One hundred years ago the first Methodist sermon was preached on this side of the Atlantic. The minister was a common mechanic—like his great Master, a *carpenter* ; the congregation consisted of five persons ; the church, a private room in a humble tenement in the lower part of the city of New York. After the sermon the five hearers were enrolled in a class, and this was the origin of Methodism on the American continent. Its origin in the eyes of the world was as humble as that of Christianity itself 1800 years before. And human reason would have anticipated as little for the world from the one as from the other. Yet the little vine, so roughly

planted, has survived the scorching of the sun and the pelting of the storm, and, after the lapse of a century, continues to spread abroad its branches and to bear its fruit. The extemporized, unlicensed local preacher is now, at the close of 1866, represented by 7,576 traveling and 8,602 local preachers, or 16,178 in all, many of them men of eminent attainments and exalted influence in the world. The little congregation of five is, after the lapse of only a century—a period not unfrequently spanned by the lifetime of a single individual—represented by a Church thoroughly organized, of widely-extended influence, wealth and power, now numbering 1,032,184 communicants; and over five millions of the population of these United States are looking to her for instruction and guidance.

But the statistics of the Methodist Episcopal Church, wonderful as they are, do not present the full results of Methodism on this continent. In order to this we must take in all the branches of the great Methodist family. This furnishes the following table:

CHURCHES.	Members.	Tr. Min	L. P.	Population
Methodist Episcopal Church, . . .	1,032,184	7,576	8,602	5,160,920
Methodist Episcopal Church South,	708,949	2,784	5,353	2,835,796
Canada Wesleyan Church, . . .	53,954	591	. . .	215,816
Canada Methodist Episcopal Church	19,746	216	. . .	78,984
Methodist Protestant Church, . .	105,120	773	. . .	420,480
American Wesleyan Church, . . .	25,620	193	. . .	102,480
African Methodist Episcopal Church	53,670	387	. . .	268,350
Methodist Episcopal Zion Church,	30,600	200	. . .	122,400
Evangelical Association, . . .	51,185	386	. . .	204,740
Other Methodist Bodies, . . .	19,342	120	. . .	77,368
Grand Total, . . . . .	2,100,370	13,216	13,955	9,487,334

Thus we see that Methodism has grown up from its small beginnings, increasing so rapidly that within a hundred years it has brought within the sphere of its influence more than one quarter of the entire population of these United States. A wonderful success, but involving an awful responsibility! Nine millions of immortal souls to be guided heavenward! How much of Christian vitality and of power is needed for the work! May the Church never be wanting in that respect!

## II. COMPARATIVE VIEWS.

But let us look at the subject in a comparative point of view. The latest returns accessible to us give the following statistics of membership in the leading Christian denominations in the United States, and also the aggregate of Protestantism:

Protestant Communicants in the United States, . . . . .	5,138,809
Methodist Episcopal, . . . . .	1,032,184
Regular Baptist, . . . . .	1,040,303
Presbyterian—Old and New Schools, . . . . .	363,469
Congregationalists, . . . . .	259,110
Protestant Episcopal, . . . . .	150,593
All kinds of Methodists in the United States, . . . . .	2,100,370
All kinds of Baptists, . . . . .	1,480,737
All kinds of Presbyterians, . . . . .	569,772

This table shows that the Methodist Episcopal Church, at the close of its first century, numbers *seven times* as many communicants as the Protestant Episcopal; *four times* as many as the Congregational Church; and nearly *three times* as many as both the Old and New School Presbyterian Churches put together. It shows also that the aggregate of Methodism is as great as that of all kinds of Baptists and all kinds of Presbyterians put together. Or if we take

the aggregate of Protestantism in the United States, we find that more than *two-fifths* of the whole is represented by the various branches of Methodism. Truly there has been a handful of corn cast into the earth upon the top of the mountains; and the fruit thereof now shakes like Lebanon.

But let us give another table of comparison furnished to our hand—one that will show the number of inhabitants for each Church member in these several denominations:

DENOMINATION.	1800.	1850.	1860.
Episcopalians, . . . . .	472.7-12	313.5-7	228
Congregationalists, . . . . .	70.1-3	117.1-3	119.1-2
Baptists, . . . . .	59.1-3	33.5-6	31.1-3
Presbyterians—Old and New, .	131.1-2	67.15-17	71.1-2
Methodist Episcopal Church, .	81.1-3	32.1-6	31.1-7
All bodies of Methodism, . . .	. . . . .	16.1-2	15.2-5

Thus we find that the Methodist Episcopal Church has outstripped all her sister denominations, not only in her absolute progress, but also in the ratio of her advance compared with the population of the country. And that, too, while tens of thousands converted at Methodist altars have been drawn into other denominations. We glory in the fact that almost universally those who are now our members were brought to Christ by our own instrumentality, and converted at our own altars. We glory also in the fact that multitudes now in other Christian communions were brought to Christ by the same agencies. We trust that, wherever they have found Christian homes, they are all the better Christians from the genuineness and thoroughness of their conversion.

## III. DECREASE AND RECOVERY.

Two periods of decrease in membership are found in the history of the Church. The first was in the decade ending with 1850. It was owing to the secession of the Southern Conferences in 1846—a movement made in the interest of American slavery, and designed to throw around the system the sacred sanction of religion. It carried into the Methodist Episcopal Church South no less than 482,945 members and 1,283 ministers—sweeping away at one fell stroke nearly one half of the membership of the Church.

The decrease between 1860 and 1865 resulted from the great rebellion. The disloyalty of Virginia and Maryland largely infected our members, and led many of them at once into rebellion against the Government and into alliance with the Methodist Episcopal Church South. But a more honorable, though still lamentable, consequence of the war was that thousands of our soldier-members were slain upon battle-fields, died in hospitals and camps, or were starved to death in those slaughter-pens of the rebellion, which have noted it with infamy all over the civilized world. If, in the language of the martyred President Lincoln, the Methodist Church “sent more soldiers to the field” than any other Church, she also laid more victims upon the altar of sacrifice for our common country.

Yet is the Church rapidly regaining her lost ground. And at the close of her Centennial year, she has recovered nearly all she had lost both by the Southern secession and the Southern rebellion. Such

is her wonderful energy of recuperation, or rather such is the power of God in her midst.

## IV. CHURCHES.

But let us look at other substantial evidences of the progress of the Church. In 1766 the rough and cheap edifice built by Embury in New York, and the log meeting-house built by Strawbridge in Maryland, represented all her wealth in churches. Now she has 10,462 churches, some of them the most elegant structures in the land, built at an outlay of \$29,494,004. To these we are to add 3,314 parsonages, costing \$4,420,958, making in churches and parsonages a total investment of \$33,914,962. Surely here is an evidence of means as well as of liberality and of devotion to the cause in the membership of the Church. It indicates, also, that the Church is no ephemeral concern. She has laid firm foundations and is building spiritual homes for her children in the generations to come.

The following table, compiled from the United States census for 1860, is very suggestive:

DENOMINATION.	No. Chs	Sittings.	Cost.
Methodist, . . . . .	19,883	6,259,799	33,093,371
Baptist, . . . . .	11,221	3,749,553	19,799,378
Presbyterian, . . . . .	5,061	2,088,838	24,227,359
Roman Catholic, . . . . .	2,550	1,404,437	26,774,119
Congregationalist, . . . . .	2,234	956,351	13,327,511
Protestant Episcopal, . . . . .	2,145	847,296	21,665,698
All others, . . . . .	10,915	3,822,477	32,510,432
Total in United States, . . . . .	54,009	19,128,751	\$171,398,432

From the above it will be seen that Methodism has furnished nearly two-fifths of all the churches and

nearly one-third of all the church accommodations in this land. She numbers more churches than all kinds of Baptists, all kinds of Presbyterians, and the Congregationalists put together. She furnishes nearly eight times as many churches and nearly seven times as many church sittings as the Roman Catholic Church; and thus has become one of our strong anchorage grounds as a Protestant Republic.

#### V SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

Then, too, she is gathering the children into her embrace. No Church has made better provision for them. On her book catalogue is found a list of nearly 2,000 choice works, published especially for the children. These works are the productions of the best writers for children both in Europe and America. Over 700,000 of them are now sold annually, and the demand for them is increasing every year. Our young people enter into the work earnestly and heartily, and find in their labor a source of the most blessed improvement as well as usefulness.

The result of all this outlay and effort is the gathering of Sunday schools in all parts of the land. Not only do they rise up in the city and the village, but our frontier settlements, however sparse or remote, are every-where studded with them—precious, glittering diamonds of promise for the coming time. This work now comprises 13,948 schools and an army of 153,699 officers and teachers, and a still grander array of 931,724 scholars. We trust before the close of the Centennial year it will reach a million. In their libraries are to be found 2,644,291 volumes, and there

are distributed among them monthly over 300,000 copies of our Sunday School Advocate. And what is better than all, during the past year 25,122 conversions are reported in the Sunday school. A Church that thus takes care of her young and folds their childhood to her breast, will not fail to have the earnest love of their manhood and womanhood in the coming years.

#### VI. EDUCATIONAL WORK.

Nor has the Church been inattentive to the general education of her young. The charge that she was opposed to education, and that only ignorant and uncultivated persons were found in her communion, and only illiterate ministers served in her pulpits, never had its foundation in truth. Methodism, though cradled in the open air and rocked by the fierce blasts of savage persecution, nevertheless had her birthplace in England's most honored seat of learning, and never failed to number among her ministers men eminent for scholarly attainments and for the highest form of culture.

Such a man was Wesley, the great founder. Such also were Whitefield, the unrivaled orator; Charles Wesley, whose heaven-inspired hymns are sung in all churches; John Fletcher, the keen edge of whose logic left its marks upon the iron system of Calvinism, inflicting wounds that are unhealed to the present day; and Adam Clarke, whose classical lore challenged the admiration of the world; and Richard Watson, whose vindication of revealed religion will forever stand as a monument of his own intellectual



greatness. So were there also noble men and courtly women who were not ashamed to bear the reproach of Methodism.

In our own country, we, ourselves, have never realized the great and varied resources with which God has gifted the Church—the number of noble and influential men, as well as the vast amount of wealth within her pale. Why should we wonder that other denominations have fallen into the same error, or, if they have even gone farther, and taken it for granted that only the ignorant and the low become Methodists? It is not necessary at this late day to confront this error. The sturdy facts and the noble men from the ranks of Methodism, that have come up before the nation, have already dispelled the hallucination from our own minds, and the prejudice from the minds of our enemies.

God forbid that we should ever fail to reach down to the ignorant and the poor. In the ranks of such are to be found the great majority of the race. There, too, may be found those among whom the Gospel has ever gathered its grandest harvests. And there precisely may be found such as the Savior himself ministered unto. But the Church may also point to her men of eminence and just renown in all the departments of commercial enterprise, in all the learned professions, and in public life. She may point to her twenty-seven colleges and theological seminaries erected and endowed at a cost of \$3,100,000; her eighty-four academies, seminaries, and female colleges, with her regiment of eight hundred professors and teachers, and her

army corps of 26,500 students, marching up the highway of intelligence and virtue, and erelong to occupy the posts of influence and power. She might point to the fact, that there is scarcely a State university in all the land in whose board of instruction she is not honorably represented, and that more than half of all of them are now, or have been presided over by her sons, eminent alike for sound piety and exalted attainments. To all these may she point, not only as the evidence of her faithfulness in the culture and elevation of her people, but also as the pledge of still grander results in the future.

#### VII. HER BOOK CONCERN AND RELIGIOUS LITERATURE.

The charge of ignorance and illiteracy can never lie against the Methodist Episcopal Church. In 1789, only five years after the organization of the Church, her celebrated "Book Concern" was founded. Its design was to furnish a healthful religious literature to her people. The capital with which it was started was \$600, and that was borrowed. From that time to the present, it has continued a ceaseless flow of the purest and best religious literature, the stream ever increasing in proportion to the growth and wants of the Church. Who can ever estimate the amount of good that has been accomplished through this agency! The little rill has become a river.

Its work is now carried on by two principal Book Concerns—one in New York and one in Cincinnati. It has eleven depositories, accommodating different sections of the country, and located mainly in the

large cities. Its growth and enlargement have been almost marvelous. During the period of seventy-seven years, it has been managed by men whose only bond for the faithful discharge of their duties was their character and position in the Church, and managed, too, all that time without a single defalcation or failure. The \$600 *borrowed* capital has resulted in an *owned* capital of \$555,359.42 in the General Concern at New York, and \$402,939.30 in the Western Book Concern—making a grand total of net capital in the joint Methodist Book Concern of \$958,298.72. Surely here is an enginery of tremendous power, consecrated as it is to the work of disseminating religious literature among the people.

But let us inquire what is being done with this capital; what material agencies it sets in motion, and what material results it brings forth. Its most extensive manufactories are located in New York, Cincinnati, and Chicago. It keeps in constant employment about thirty-five cylinder presses; issues twelve weekly papers—one of them in German—with an aggregate circulation of 150,000 copies; also a well-sustained quarterly, and a family monthly magazine, circulating 35,000 copies; a Sunday School Advocate and a German Sunday school paper, together circulating about 325,000 copies. And besides all this we find a large book catalogue of publications comprising some of the ablest productions of modern times; rich especially in the vindication of Methodist theology, and richer still in Christian biography. Some idea of the immense power and influence of this great arm of the Church may be

gathered from the fact that in the Centennial year of American Methodism, and in the seventy-seventh year of its operations, the actual business of the Book Concern in the East amounted to \$675,513.19, and in the West to \$628,453.76—making a grand total of \$1,303,966.95 as the business of one year.

Its publications may be found on the shores of the Pacific as well as on the Atlantic coast; in the vast interior territories springing up in the gold regions, as well as in the old-settled States. Truly, this is a wonderful agency! It may well vindicate the Church that originated it, and the membership that sustained and built it up, from the charge of any want of interest in a sound religious literature. Thanks be to God for such a living fountain of intelligence and truth! May its waters never cease to flow into every part of the Church, diffusing spirituality, and bringing forth the most glorious fruitage!

#### VIII. HER MISSION WORK.

While the Church has thus been building up herself at home, she has not been unmindful of her obligations to send the Gospel abroad. Our Missionary Society, it is true, dates back only forty-six years. But then it should be borne in mind that ours was a missionary Church from the beginning. The first eighteen years the Church was without general organization; and it had been organized only thirty-six years when its Missionary Society was formed. And now, in forty-six years, that Society, beginning with \$823.04 the first year, has grown up till in 1866 its collections rounded up to the sum of \$686,380.30. Its

missionaries in foreign fields number 381; to foreign populations in our own country, 221; and to domestic missions, including our frontier settlements, the great gold regions of the interior, and our missions to the freedmen and the whites in the South, 1,630, making a grand total of 2,232 missionaries in the foreign and domestic work. With what results this work has been carried on the following table will show:

Members in Foreign Missions, . . . . .	8,333
Members among Foreign Populations, . . . . .	18,937
Members in the Mission Work in the South, . . . . .	39,412
Members in the Domestic Missions, . . . . .	<u>72,515</u>
Total members in all the Missions, . . . . .	139,197

Surely this is a glorious result—one that may cheer and stimulate the heart of the Church. But we must not fail to add that such has been the enlargement of the mission work both abroad and at home, and especially in the South, during the past year, that the General Mission Committee has called upon the Church for \$1,000,000 to carry on and enlarge this grand mission work during this Centennial year of Methodism. God grant that the response may correspond to the greatness of our obligations and the grandeur of our mission work!

#### IX. GENERAL RESULTS.

There are other grander results of Methodism which may not be aggregated here. Its influence upon the civilization of this country, upon the development of the great principles of human liberty—the freedom of the 4,000,000 of blacks in the South—upon the maintenance of the integrity of this great

Republic, especially in the late rebellion, the impulse to Christian activity imparted to other Churches, the multitudes that have been converted at Methodist altars who have found spiritual homes in other Churches, and above all the unnumbered host, their names unknown on earth, but each one recorded in heaven, that have been guided heavenward on earth, and now celebrate the song of redemption in glory—all these are results that may not be known on earth, but they are all written in the book of God, and we shall know them by and by.

The aggregate result shows that to-day Methodism is world-wide. The sun never sets upon her work. Not only have England, Ireland, and the United States and the Canadas witnessed her heroic endeavors and bloodless conquests, but her boundaries are enlarged and enlarging every-where. In Germany and France, in Southern and Western Africa, in Hindoostan and in China, in Australia and on all the islands of the Southern Ocean, all along our Pacific coast and all through the vast golden regions of the interior her standard has been raised and her missionaries are toiling. More than fifty languages reëcho to more than twice fifty races and nations the glad tidings of free grace for dying men. The Himalaya of Central Asia respond to the Rocky Mountains of North America—"Lo, Methodism is here!" The Mountains of the Moon and the Andes catch the passing sound, and, shouting from their lofty summits, hail its near approach.

Some have supposed that Methodism was ephemeral, and would soon die out. But there is nothing in

its past history or its present condition that would warrant such a conclusion. Never before did she command so many resources for the prosecution of her great commission. And looking back over her history during the century that is past, beholding her present condition and capabilities of action, we see abundant evidence that she will continue to be foremost among the mighty forces that shall ere long win the conquest of the world for Christ.

#### X. THE CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION.

But, in conclusion, let us notice the results we have sought to realize in our Centennial celebration. These are twofold in their character. *First*, religious. That we should consecrate ourselves individually anew to God; that the whole Church should be exhorted to ascend to a higher plane of spiritual life; that she shall come to possess so much of the Divine anointing, so much of the old spirit poured out upon our fathers in the early age of Methodism, that she may become equipped anew for her godlike work.

We have noticed the spirit and the work of *early* Methodism, and marked its growth and fruits in America during the century of its life and action. We propose to celebrate its Centennial; to lay of our means, as God has blessed us, offerings upon his altar; to erect our monuments of gratitude; to found and endow our institutions of learning; to enlarge the scope of our missionary work; to dot all the land with churches more beautiful and inviting; to endow our ministry with higher culture and with broader capabilities, that we may send onward to future gen-

erations, beautified and enlarged, the inheritance bequeathed by the fathers unto us. It is well. We owe it to God who has done so much for us; we owe it to the fathers whose memories we bear in holy reverence; we owe it to the generations and ages yet to come. This consecration of our substance shall affect our own hearts, shall make us holier, happier, and more devoted. To all these efforts would I give my means, my sympathies, and my prayers.

And yet, if I were asked, by what one event more than any other would you desire that the Centennial of Methodism should be distinguished? it would not be the founding of the grandest university in the land; not the erection of the most costly and magnificent cathedrals of worship; not even the overflowing of Missionary and Church Extension treasuries to spread abroad the human agencies of salvation; but it should be that quickening from heaven—the baptism of the Church with the old Methodistic fire that burned upon her altars and glowed in her ministry a hundred years ago. O, if the Church with her present compactness and efficiency of organization, her wealth, and talent, and influence, her ministry so willing to sacrifice and toil, if she should only be baptized with the old Methodistic *fire*, and endued with the old Methodistic *power*, it seems to me that neither men nor devils could withstand her onward march to the conquest of the world.

And then, too, brethren, there is a great problem awaiting solution here. That problem is the mission—the future of Methodism in the world. The Methodism of the past is secure. It has wrought into the



very heart of the world's wickedness, and filled some of the grandest chapters in the history of the world's redemption. But what shall be the Methodism of the future? That concerns us now. I have already referred to Isaac Taylor, who awarded signal honor to Methodism. You remember his theory. It was that Methodism has already accomplished its special providential mission, and will henceforth take its place among the first of the ordinary agencies of the Gospel. You remember also how we repudiated the theory, and said it could not be true! How we asseverated that we were the same Methodism as in the days of John Wesley! Our Quarterly thundered its anathemas; our periodicals, high and low, brought logic, and wit, and argument to expose the fallacy of the daring theorist! And yet, brethren, after all, there was an uneasy conviction that we were not doing exactly the work that Wesley did, and the same effects that were common to the ministry of his time rarely attended ours in the present day. My brethren, I do not underestimate the magnitude of our work, nor the grandeur of the mission of Methodism. It is a noble, godlike work. For breadth, and compass, and power; for compactness and efficiency; for the unswerving attachment and active zeal of her membership, the Methodist Episcopal Church may challenge comparison with any other evangelical Church in Christendom. But, brethren, I have felt if to these could only be added the heavenly baptism of the olden time, the Church would stand complete—the wonder of men, the object of unceasing admiration to angels, and the herald of God's millennium on

the earth. O that it might come down upon the ministry and membership of the whole Church ! Such an event would thrill *heaven*, as well as earth. Tell me, ye old heroes of Methodism, who have fought the good fight and won the crown ; ye fathers and mothers, who sang the songs of holy triumph in the days of your pilgrimage, and shouted along your pathway to the skies, will not heaven's arches ring with louder and sweeter halleluias, as from your excellent glory ye behold the mighty host of your succession, inspired by the same triumphant faith through which ye wrought your glorious victories in the time of your pilgrimage ? In the midst of toil and sacrifice, in the midst of poverty, persecution, and suffering, your simple faith laid the foundations of the temple ; but to us, your sons, the rearing of the superstructure was committed. Unseen heroes—not of the dead, but of the *living* past—it shall be ours to seek the same inspiration that led ye on so gloriously ; that the polished top-stone that is to crown the temple may be lifted up to its lofty summit in the same spirit and by the same power that laid its foundations in the olden time.

We are also called upon to make our Centennial memorable by our thank-offerings to God ; to erect our monuments of gratitude for what God hath wrought. But there are to be no useless monuments. The general plan devised to guide the benevolent thought and action of the Church, and which will not expend itself in the Centennial year, contemplates not vain show, but practical utility at every point. It goes directly, in all its appliances

and details, to strengthen the agencies of the Church, and to give her greater efficiency and success in all her plans and enterprises. It contemplates wider fields of enterprise, grander undertakings, and sublimer successes for the cause of the Redeemer in the coming time. As Methodism comes up laden with the toil and weariness of the first century of her militant life, we would infuse into her arm a stronger nerve, sprinkle her brow with a holier baptism, and send her forth into the coming century to win still grander conquests for humanity and God.

The place and time of the great events of the world, those that have marked the eras of human progress or the development of the great elements of National life, have always been celebrated among men. The anniversary of the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers, and of the Declaration of Independence, will be borne in sacred remembrance as long as Protestant faith and republican liberty endure upon the American continent.

What American, as he has stood upon Bunker Hill, and gazed upon that granite shaft—massive, solitary, grand! tapering away up, till it seems to pierce the very clouds—but has felt his heart stirred by the memory of heroic deeds and patriotic sacrifices! Who can stand there, and let all these precious memories rush over his soul, without feeling his love of country kindled anew! Thus does this monument not only express a nation's gratitude to the heroic dead, but it kindles anew and perpetuates down, through successive generations, the same love of liberty and the same heroic devotion to

country. So let us, beloved brethren, raise our monuments of gratitude to God, who hath done so great things for us! Let the monumental shaft rise to heaven, that as the ages go by drifting down to eternity, the successive generations of men may behold it, and be inspired with the same gratitude and love that prompted the holy offering.

When the Israelites crossed the River Jordan, passing through the parted waters as upon dry ground, they took up stones from the river's bed, and erected a monument in Gilgal; and for this reason—that when their children, and their children's children, should ask, "What mean these stones? for what purpose was this monument erected?" then their fathers might tell to the children how God dried up the waters so that "Israel came over this Jordan on dry land." Thus would they proclaim to posterity how God brought them into the promised land, by miracles and wonders—making them who were no people, a people and a nation, great and honored among the nations of the earth.

My brethren, we are permitted to behold the close of the first century of Methodism in this fair land of ours. God has brought us through the river as on dry ground. He has given us a goodly heritage, enlarged and beautified our borders, and made our inheritance sure for ages yet to come. Let us, then, cast up our monumental heap, attesting our gratitude, and expressive of our thanksgiving to Almighty God for his great mercies. The dividing stream that separates between the first and the second century of Methodism is just before us. Let each one as he

crosses over take a stone from the bed of the river and pile up the monument, that when our children in the ages of Methodism yet to come shall say, "What mean these stones?" the answer shall be, "The Lord God dried up the waters of Jordan before our fathers, and brought us into the promised inheritance of his love; therefore was this monument erected, 'that all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty; that ye might fear the Lord your God forever.'"

Let us do our work, brethren; let us do it well; let us show ourselves worthy of the great spiritual heritage God has given us; let us, with the Divine blessing, give new vitality and strength to those blessed instrumentalities of ours, and send them onward to the generations and centuries yet to come. And above all, let us catch anew that Divine inspiration which constituted the great glory of early Methodism, and gave to it its marvelous success in winning souls to Christ and training them for heaven.

And may the blessing of God continue to abide with the Church, leading her forward to still grander achievements! May he be "unto her a wall of fire round about, and the glory in the midst of her!" May her converts in all lands be multiplied! may she shine forth with purer and brighter light, holding fast the faith! And when another century shall have rolled away, and the second Centennial of Methodism be celebrated, may there be multiplied thousands, who, surveying the past and rejoicing in the present, shall exclaim with adoring wonder, "*What hath God wrought!*" and still other multiplied thousands to

send back the response, *“Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.”*

And *“now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen!”*

## III.

## THE CROSS OF CHRIST.

PREACHED BEFORE THE NEW YORK CONFERENCE, AT KINGSTON,

MAY 5, 1853.

*"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."* Galatians vi, 14.

AS the "yoke" was the symbol of Judaism, so the "cross" is the symbol of Christianity. When a proselyte from Gentilism renounced the errors of paganism and embraced the Jewish faith, pledging himself to an observance of the rites and an obedience to the requirements of Judaism, he was said to receive the yoke of the Jewish law. Thus our Savior, placing the simplicity of the Gospel in contrast with the heavy burdens of the Jewish yoke, says, "*My* yoke is easy, and *my* burden is light." Thus, also, when the Judaizing teachers sought to make the Gentile converts to the Christian faith submit to the peculiarities of the Mosaic law, the apostle rebuked them, and said, "Why tempt ye God to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?" And so, on the other hand, the "cross" is made the symbol of Christianity; "the Cross of Christ" is made to express the Gospel of Christ. Hence, the apostle speaks of "the

preaching of the Cross," and also of glorying "in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Let no one suppose, however, that the apostle was a boaster of relics—glorying in the literal cross—the *wood* upon which the Savior suffered, bled, and died; or even that he gloried in the mere historical fact that the Lord Jesus Christ suffered death upon the cross. That cross upon which he was suspended possessed no intrinsic virtue above that upon which any condemned victim might have suffered under the sentence of the Roman governor; certainly no more than the charred stake that had been grasped by the burning sinews of the Christian martyr. The mere historical fact of Christ's crucifixion, by sentence of Pontius Pilate, is admitted by both Jew and Greek, by both pagan and infidel, as well as by the Christian. But the one class regarded him merely as a malefactor, condemned and executed for alleged crimes against the Roman law; and, therefore, in his death they discover no peculiar moral or spiritual significance. The other class behold in that victim "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world," and in that suffering and death an expiatory offering—an atonement for the sins of the whole world. Hence, to them there is a majesty, a glory in the transaction, and "the cross" becomes the grand symbol of that system of truth and that plan of salvation which rests upon the atoning sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The doctrine of the Cross, then, is, that by his sufferings and death our Lord Jesus Christ made a full, free, and perfect atonement for the sins of the



whole world; that is to say, he so met the demands of the Divine law, so vindicated its purity, and so endured its penalty as the representative man of our race, that the Divine government is vindicated, and God can be just and yet justify the repenting and believing sinner. It is in this view that the Cross assumes a transcendent importance in the grand scheme of redemption and salvation. It is God's wondrous scheme of mercy, whose very brightness has eclipsed all the other manifestations of his glory. Its first pencil of light pierced down through the darkness that overspread our first Eden when innocence had departed from it. It has ever been the bow of hope, spanning the entire horizon of a fallen race—rising like a pillar of fire from the awful darkness of Paradise lost, and arching high above the clouds and tempests of the world's wickedness, till it also rested upon the immovable bulwarks of Paradise regained. The Cross, then, becomes the vital element of the Gospel. And thus the great apostle ever turns to it as the anchor of his faith, the sun of his hope, and in all lands and among all people he makes it the burden of his ministry. The pomp and splendor of the temple can not win him from the Cross; the madness of the wild beasts of Ephesus can not frighten him from his strong refuge. The assembled wisdom and eloquence of Greece, and even the regal splendor of the imperial city sink into insignificance when the glory of the Cross appears. It is then

“The powers of hell are captive led,  
Dragg'd to the portals of the sky.”

By the Cross, then, we mean that which embodies the great doctrines of the Gospel and presents them in all their clearness and force to the mind. We mean "Christ as the world's confidence and model—Christ who *justifies* by his blood and *sanctifies* by his grace;" and our object will be to exhibit THE CROSS OF CHRIST AS THE ONE THEME OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTER'S GLORYING.

In prosecuting our discussion we shall propose two inquiries for examination: first, Why should the Cross of Christ be the one theme of the Christian minister's glorying? and, secondly, How shall *we*, as Christian ministers, make it the one theme of *our* glorying?

*I. In the first place, then, we inquire, Why should the Cross of Christ be the one theme of the Christian minister's glorying?*

In this age of boasted progress in mental and spiritual development, when the precocious intellects, arrogantly proclaiming to be the great reformers, not merely of the Church, but of Christianity itself, are beginning to assert that the old doctrines of the Gospel, like a "dish that has been hashed and re-hashed for eighteen centuries," are fit only to nauseate the clear and unfettered intellect; and that henceforth the philosophical spirit of the age demands a reconstruction of the Christian system, one that shall give it freedom, elasticity, one that shall make it more spiritual and philosophical; in fine, while they are demanding that Christianity shall be metamorphosed into a spiritualism without doctrine and a philosophy without truth, and while many in the

Christian Church seem inclined so far to concede to these arrogant claims and this brazen impudence as to relax the rigidity of Christian doctrine and discipline, we say, in such an age and amid such tendencies, it becomes us to look carefully after the old landmarks, to dig down and survey the foundation-stones, huge, unpolished, and unsightly as they may appear, of the sacred fabric.

This brings us directly to the Cross of Christ; and we ask not merely why it was the theme of the apostle's glorying, but why it should be the theme of the Christian minister's glorying, in all ages and in all places?

1. First, then, consider the place it occupies in the development of the Christian scheme. Here we are brought to view it as the full and final development of God's plan for saving sinners. In its origin it antedates every other professedly remedial system, and is antecedent to all the forms of paganism. The doctrine of Christ crucified looms up amid all the types and shadows of the old dispensation; it is seen in the sacrifices of the Jew, shadowed forth in the types of the law, celebrated by the inspired poets, predicted by the prophets, and diligently looked for by all conversant with the oracles of God. Without this the sacrifices of the old dispensation would have been without significance and without virtue, its types without the great Antitype, its promises and hopes never to be realized. We have now a "living sacrifice" and a spiritual temple. The work of redemption, adumbrated through long ages, is now complete; the great sacrifice, the wonder of angels and

the terror of devils, has been offered; the fearful sentence of death has been annulled, and man may be restored to the favor of his God and live forever. The mighty stream of salvation, gushing up from all the fountains of Divine mercy and love, has swollen into a mighty ocean, whose waters lave the shores of every continent and island on the face of the whole earth.

2. Consider, again, the relations of the Cross of Christ to the other parts of the Christian scheme. In the Christian scheme, as in all others, there must be some central truth, some first principle, which gives life, motion, and harmony to all the subordinate elements. Take away this first and great principle, or dethrone its power, and the subsidiary elements, disjoined and powerless, utterly perish, or produce only disorder and ruin. The Cross of Christ is here the impregnating principle that pervades and gives life to all besides. It is the Atlas, upon whose broad shoulders the mighty fabric of the world's hope rests in eternal steadfastness. Does God condescend to hold intercourse with man?—what is the revelation which he makes, but the *apocalypse* of Christ crucified? Is the Holy Spirit, in condescension to man's weakness and darkness, poured out?—its advent is at the bidding of the Cross. Does Christianity come to us with its baptismal water, its sacrificial emblems, and its Church in robes of white and uttering songs of praise?—they are so many garlands strung to beautify the Cross. Does the sorrowing penitent glow with comfort as his faith apprehends a divine Intercessor?—he feels that that

Intercessor "hath somewhat also to offer," having, "not by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, entered in once into the holy place, and obtained eternal redemption for us." Do the dark shadows of death and the grave disappear before the dawning splendors of an assured resurrection?—let us not forget that body and soul have been redeemed from the power of death by the Cross of Christ.

Whatever of vitality, of truth, or of power, is possessed by the Christian scheme, its origin is to be found in the mysterious *fact* that "once in the end of the world hath Christ appeared to put away sin, by the sacrifice of himself," and by this means has "brought in everlasting righteousness," which "is unto all and upon all them that believe." Sublime, glorious manifestation! It reaches up to the highest summit of heaven's justice; it fathoms the deepest depths of man's misery! Around the cross gather the penitent of all ages; here the despairing are cheered by the rising beams of hope; and here the weary, troubled spirit finds rest. Prophets and kings, apostles and martyrs, the sage and the priest, the peasant and the prince, the simple and the wise—all gather here. They come not as to some visionary "*altar form*," established as a spiritual decoy, a practical fraud to allure to faith and virtue; but to a true and living sacrifice—Jesus Christ, whose blood cleanseth from all sin. Around this true and living sacrifice cluster the universal Church—the redeemed on earth and the redeemed in heaven. Redemption is the song of our pilgrimage, and it shall be the song of our triumph.

Divest Christianity of the doctrine and glory of the Cross, and her indwelling virtue is gone, her glory has departed, her life is extinct ; and nothing but the unsightly and powerless corpse remains, tainting the very atmosphere it was designed to purify. Exclude the doctrine of salvation by the Cross of Christ from its appropriate place in the Christian scheme ; convert it into a fable formed and garnished simply for dramatic effect ; expunge it from the character of our common hope ; strike down this bulwark of faith upon which the soul of man relies, and you overspread the moral heavens with the blackness of darkness forever. The light of life goes out in the soul, and heaven itself appears only as a tantalizing vision to mock the despair of man. Improve the Church in its organization and form, if need be ; adapt it to modern taste, and culture, and refinement ; make it philosophical, democratic, if you must ; give scientific development, logical form to its doctrines, if you imagine you can render any more clear to the eye of the soul the good old faith that nourished St. Paul with ambrosial food, and sustained him amid a thousand conflicts ; but enter not into its inner sanctuary with unhallowed tread ; lay not your hand—I beseech you, lay not your hand upon the door-posts of its temple ; remove not the foundation rock upon which it stands, lest you blot out the last ray of hope to man, sever the only tie that allies him in holiness and happiness to God, and sunder the last link that can unite earth to heaven. Alas, what would remain to our race, but “the blackness of darkness forever !” What, but the awful spectacle—awaking the sighs and sorrows of

angels as well as of men—an orphaned race, “with out hope and without God!”

3. But again, consider the Cross of Christ in its relation to our justification as sinners, and to our moral and spiritual purification. No problem has so deeply moved the heart of man as the question, “How shall a man be just with his God?” It has been *the* question of all ages and of all reflective, thinking men. The most thoughtful of heathen philosophers revolved it with deep concern. It has been blended with the mythology and poetry of every age and of all people; but neither nature nor reason has ever given any response that could satisfy the conscience or the heart. After nearly six thousand years of speculation, thought, and invention, human philosophy is as far from the solution of the great question as ever. And in all the wide range of human experience, nothing has been found adequate to purge out from the soul the stains of sin, and to extract the sting of a guilty conscience, save the atoning blood of Jesus Christ.

“Survey the wondrous cure;  
And at each step, let higher wonder rise!  
Pardon for infinite offense!  
A pardon bought with blood! with blood divine!”

I wonder not that angels desire to look into the mysteries of redemption! I wonder not that they are attracted away from the magnificent displays of almighty power and skill in the created universe to contemplate the more surprising displays of his goodness in the redemption of apostate and ruined man! The dread attraction of the Cross—mystery of

two worlds—"the science and the song of eternity!"—drawn by the magic of its power, the redeemed soul turns away from all the attractions of earth, to contemplate the one ineffable manifestation of God in the person of Jesus Christ.

Sinner—weary and heavy-laden, bewildered and lost, fainting and just ready to perish—behold thy deliverer, God! Sinner, longing after truth, yet bewildered in the unending mazes of human speculation—hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and vainly crying, "Who shall show me any good?"—behold, light has come; the Lord thy righteousness is revealed! Sinner, conscious of thy emptiness and poverty—a worm of earth, with faculties immortal, yet all debased and corrupted—groveling in the dust—behold the link that binds thee to the Infinite and the Eternal!

Christian minister—legate of heaven, ambassador of the skies—as the deep and bitter wail of the world's despair comes up from crushed, and bruised, and sorrowing humanity, how glorious the privilege of responding, "*He* is faithful and just to forgive our sins, and to cleanse from all iniquity." Standing upon the banks of that mighty stream, gushing forth in all the plenitude of divine mercy, cry aloud to all earth's famishing sons, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." Through earth and heaven let the mighty truth resound—

"This is salvation's source;  
And all our hopes arise  
From Him who, hanging on the cross,  
A spotless victim dies."



4. But again, consider in what new and glorious light the Cross of Christ reveals the character and government of God. We know what God *is*. He speaks from the vast amplitude of all his works; from the hoary ages of the receding past, the utterances of his voice come up like the peal of the deep surges on the distant ocean's shore; he speaks from the profound depths of all our mental consciousness to the soul, and we feel that God *is*. The immensity of the created universe is but a reflection of the immensity of God; its assemblage of uncounted worlds demonstrates the infinitude of his power; their order and harmony in all their diversified parts, his wisdom and his oneness; the adaptations, to please the eye, to gratify the taste, to charm the ear, and to minister, through both sense and intellect, to the happiness of all created existence, attest the goodness of the great Author; and, at the same time, the natural results of transgressions evince to us that justice is also an essential attribute of the Infinite One.

Thus we learn much of God. But there are other questions that infinitely concern us. Said a skeptic,\* bemoaning the dread darkness of his soul, "I want to know whether, when the omnipotent God created the world, he left it the sport of chance, and I am thus an orphan in the universe; and, if not, then I want to know whether all things, from the beginning, were bound up in the adamantine chains of fate, of which I am to be the sport, and with which I am to wrestle vainly forever? I want to

\* See Harrington's Confession in Eclipse of Faith.

know whether God be accessible and placable, for all the world gives token of offense ; and, if so, *how* I may approach him ; or, on the other hand, whether, having given birth to our globe and set in motion its fearful train of causes, he may not then have retired into the hidden recesses of the universe, where he beholds, with equal and horrible indifference, the pleasures and the sufferings, the joys and the sorrows of the ephemeral dust to which he has given life ? I want to know whether he has any concern in our being and happiness ; whether, after we go down into the vale of death, this conscious existence of ours is to be renewed and perpetuated—or whether, when we have finished our little day, no other dawn is to break upon our night ? Alas, who shall give response to my inquiry—who shall solve my doubt ? I have interrogated Nature and turned to every quarter of the universe in vain ; I have interrogated my own soul, but it answers not, except in smothered and doubtful whispers ; I have gazed upon nature, but its many voices speak no articulate language to *me*. I am bewildered in a dark, stormy night, drifting before fierce winds and rushing tides, amid shoals and quicksands ; and, alas, all is at the mercy of chance !”

Such, my friends, are the straggings of humanity—the sorrows and aspirations of a darkened soul. Reason fails just when we most need its support ; the light of nature proves insufficient just when we need it to enable us to grope our way through the surrounding darkness. Where, then, shall darkened humanity obtain light ? Where shall be found a solution of its perplexity and doubt ? One little

expression cuts the gordian knot of iron mystery—"God manifest in the flesh." The Cross meets and answers precisely the questions we wish solved concerning the character and government of God. His wisdom, power, and immensity are written upon all his works; and there, too, is his benevolence displayed; but over against it is his holiness, his justice. *Does God forgive sin?* We might have gone the earth over and searched through all time without any satisfactory response, and the presumption would have been in the negative. But when we come to the Cross the mystery is solved: the darkness and mystery that had enshrouded the divine character disappears. Christ came not only to atone for sin, but also to reveal God—to reveal him as he is not revealed in nature—as reason hath not discovered him. He came to unfold his benignity, his sympathy, his placability. He came, the embodied representation of God and of the divine government, to manifest God and eternal life to man. He gathered together the feeble and frail elements of our common humanity, and into those elements he poured all the plenitude of his divinity, that he might reveal God to man and unite man to God. As God-man, it has been well said, he fills the whole chasm sin has made between heaven and earth. He lays his right hand on the throne of God, his left upon the heart of the sinner, and thus unites him, through himself, to God. *Verily, God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself; and we are permitted to behold his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*

5. We invite you, again, to consider the Cross in its relations to human development and progress. It may seem strange that we should assert development of mind and human progress as one of the grand results of the Cross, when many who claim to be the great lights of the age—the only true friends of human progress, and the only ones who possess the true key to human development—affect to consider religious faith as the dismal incubus by which the human intellect has been cramped and circumscribed, and the Church as the great hinderance to human progress. With them, the first step toward the development of intellect, is to unfetter it from the shackles of religious creeds—which means nothing more than to divest the mind of all religious opinions, and reduce it to a state of supreme indifference to them. Their next step is to cure the world of its idolatry of that good old book—the Bible; and also of its deference to any authority without or above its own reason, and especially that of the Church. This accomplished, and the age of reform, of progress, of development, is begun. Mr. Newman, the great representative of this no-creed religion, tells us, that “no where from any body of priests, clergy, or ministry, as an order, is religious progress to be anticipated till intellectual creeds are destroyed.” What is very singular in the position of these men is, that at the very moment they are denouncing all creeds, they themselves are in the very act of propounding a creed of their own; and while they are denouncing the influence which the Christian Church has ever exercised in enlightening the judgments and

in forming the opinions of men as oppressive, tyrannical, and opposed to human progress, they themselves are placing their own individual opinion in counterpoise to that of the world, and demanding for it the very deference they denounce! And is the world slow to perceive the justice of their claim, and to accede to their demands? With what modesty do they commiserate its lack of philosophic insight, and its blind subservience to authority! Precious reformers these! But we can not at this moment follow them any further than they stand related to this question of human development and progress.

During all the ages that are past the world has been devising plans and systems for the development of man, for the improvement of his condition and the perfection of his nature. One philosopher has made a discovery and cried out, "Lo, here!" and the restless world have rushed to see the wonder, perhaps to receive the discovery as the hidden mystery of truth, till it grew pale, and finally disappeared in the brighter light of that which succeeded. "The present age is full of reformers and reforms, and each one is as confident as though the world had never been disappointed before, and as zealous, and, perhaps, we may say, as impudent in peddling off his wares as was Tetzal in peddling the wares of the Pope. They cry them up as though the salvation of the world depended upon them." We may be very far behind the age, but our position is, that the true development of man is not to be found in special reforms, but in the propagation and influence of the Cross of Christ. We do not mean to undervalue the

influence of the various special reforms that have marked the history of the past, or which now ruffle the surface of human society. A vast majority of them, it is true, have sunk in the deep abyss of time, and no perceptible trace of their individuality remains as a monument of what they were and what they did; and so shall it be with a vast majority of those with which the present age is teeming. They are the "unsculptured dead," and yet they played their little part and accomplished their little ends in the great theater of human development and progress. They mark the gradations of human progress and "serve the world as beacon-lights to telegraph the truth from age to age;" but no one of them is broad and deep enough to encompass the extent and the depth of the world's need, nor power to bring it up to the place where its disquiet may cease.

The Cross is a universal reformer; it is the embodiment of all truth. What all the philosophy of ancients and moderns failed to do Christianity has accomplished. She has enlightened and liberalized the mind, and made the world wiser and better. She lays before man a living *ideal*—an embodiment of all that is transcendent in intellect and all that is lovely in moral purity. She condescends to his weakness and his ignorance, that she may infuse strength into his heart and unseal the fountains of knowledge. Wherever she has gone the rigid Winter of the soul has passed away, and the spring-time of its beauty and hope has dawned. It is connected with all that is great and good in the history of our race. It has made earth and heaven vocal with joy. Under its

influence the wildest desert of barbarism has been made joyful with the glad notes of salvation; and the hearts of millions, once dwellers in the deep vale of despair and death, have been made to thrill with hope and joy.

Despite of all charges to the contrary, Christianity only has given the true and most expansive development of human sympathy; its field is the world, its brotherhood is *man*. It recognizes in every human being a brother endowed with the same faculties, allied to the same God, and born to the same destiny. Beneath all the haggard and loathsome forms with which sin has invested the darkest and most hopeless aspects of humanity, Christianity would recognize the being and claims of an immortal nature, endowed with spiritual wants and spiritual aspirations, possessed of tender affections and immortal hopes. Beneath all that deformity, and sin, and crime it would discover

“The glorious fragments of a soul immortal,  
With rubbish mixed and glittering in the dust.”

It would take up the outcast diamond, remove its rubbish and defilement, restore its beauty, and raise it on high to sparkle and glow for the admiration of angels and the glory of God. When Christianity first appeared human nature, like the man that fell among thieves, lay wounded and bruised by the wayside. Philosophy and reason for ages had passed by on the other side; but Christianity came, soothed the sorrow, healed the wounds of the bleeding victim, and turned up his darkened eye to catch the rays of

hope, and light, and life just beaming from the hill-tops of Calvary. The adamant of the heart has been smitten by its power, and the stream of human sympathy and benevolence has gushed up from its deep and holy fountains. The universal redemption of man is the great work which Christianity proposes to itself. Its aim is to make known the Gospel to all men; to plant upon every mountain-top and in the midst of every valley the standard of the Cross; to shed the healthful, life-giving light of the truth of God over every continent and upon every isle of the ocean, till man every-where shall be brought up to the full standard of his dignity and to the full measure of his destiny

With the preaching of the Cross, then, I connect the future glory and triumph of the Church of Christ. The insidious skeptic may whisper to me his misgivings in relation to the future of Christianity and the necessity of its modification, that it may not be distanced and discarded by the philosophic spirit of the age. Sir, I would say to him, Christianity asks no permission to live from either you or me—she draws her life from a higher source. If false philosophy could have dug up her foundations or poisoned her streams, it would long since have been done; if sword, or rack, or fagot, if gibes and mockery, if popular tumult or infidel objurgation, could have destroyed Christianity or weakened its power, long since they would have done it. But when I mark its vital power, the giant tread of its onward march, in the earth, I can but remember that all these achievements are by the Cross, and that so long



as the Cross is borne aloft on all the banners of the Church, so long shall her course be one of triumph and glory.

*II. We are brought, then, to our concluding inquiry, How shall we as Christian ministers make the Cross of Christ the one theme of our glorying?*

Upon this point I can make but one or two suggestions, nor need I make more.

1. And first, if we would make the Cross the one theme of our glorying, we must first make it practically and experimentally the foundation of our faith and hope, and have our hearts imbued with its living power.

Said old Jeremy Taylor, "A minister of evil life can not preach with that fervor and efficacy, with that life and spirit, as a good man does: for besides that he does not himself understand the secrets of religion, and the private inducements of the Spirit, and the sweetness of internal joy, and the inexpressible advantages of holy peace—besides all this, he can not heartily speak all he knows. He hath a clog to his foot, and a gag in his teeth." This inward experience—this incorporating the Cross, as a real and present vitality, into our present and constant consciousness—has ever constituted one great element of power in all legitimate pulpit ministration. When such a man speaks, it is with boldness, for he knows whereof he affirms; it is with power, for he has truth and God in his heart.

But there is such a thing as being eloquent, and even popular, and yet preaching to but little effect so far as the reformation and salvation of men are

concerned. Study the history of the pulpit, when the Cross, in the true sense of that word, has been excluded. The reign of Louis XIV was signalized as an era in the history of the French pulpit. Those master-orators, Bourdaloue, and Bossuet, and Massillon, and Fenelon, often excited the passions of their courtly audiences to the highest pitch by the bold strokes and affecting appeals of their eloquence: but their oratory was that of the stage and adapted only to stage effect. The audience was impressed, the feelings excited, the passions aroused; but when the gust of feeling had passed over, no traces were left behind. The immense congregations that hung upon their ministry—enchanted by their eloquence—continued as corrupt as ever. They were alarmed, or they wept for a moment, and then turned again to their follies and vices. The eloquence of the preacher was heard as “the music of one that had a pleasant voice, or could play well upon an instrument;” but no permanent impression was made. How unlike this was the ministry of those mighty men of God who heralded the dawn of Methodism! Unschooled in the world’s philosophy, undisciplined in the intricacies of logic, untaught in the arts of the rhetorician; but the Cross was with them a living, vital element, and gloriously did they display its power. O what power so desirable to a Christian minister as that of molding earth anew, and populating heaven with new, redeemed, and happy recruits! Give me as a Christian minister that power, and I ask no higher gift; let me witness such results of my ministry, and I will ask no richer reward.

When the celebrated Neander was asked the cause of the defection of the German Churches from sound doctrine, he replied, "*A dead orthodoxy.*" There is nothing that can so guard the purity of the Christian faith as spiritual vitality in the Church. Alas for us, my brethren, when the holy fire ceases to burn upon the altars of our spiritual Israel! we may then have our costly and magnificent edifices of worship—graceful in their proportions, beautiful and imposing in their architecture; their seats may be thronged with refined and wealthy congregations; their vaulted arches may reverberate with the choicest strains of music; the schools of human learning may contribute eloquent and refined thought, to feast the intellect and tickle the fancy of the gathered multitude, and the ceremonies of religion be performed with increasing pomp and splendor; but, alas, the whole would want vitality; and under its Lethean influence immortal souls would be lulled to sleep and slumber on, till roused by the angry surge rolling up on the dark shores of perdition. The mighty stream of death would lave the very threshold of the sanctuary, and on its bosom multitudes would be borne from the Church of God to the gates of hell. May God avert so fearful a calamity from our spiritual Israel!

Our grand defense is in a holy ministry—one that shall embody and express the power of the Cross.

2. Secondly, we may glory in the Cross of Christ by giving clear, emphatic, and effective utterance to this cardinal doctrine of the Gospel in all our pulpit ministry, "I determined not to know any thing among

you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." Such was the determination of St. Paul when he sought the conversion of the refined yet dissolute Corinthians. Never did Christian minister assume a graver task—never arm himself with a nobler purpose; and here has he left an example worthy of all imitation. The celebrated Dr. Chalmers, for several years after he entered the ministry, was mortified and utterly confounded to find that he had failed of usefulness. Under these feelings he was led to discover the simplicity, the spirituality, and the power of the Cross, and from that moment he determined to *know nothing but Christ Jesus, and him crucified*. The results of that determination are written in ineffaceable characters upon the moral history of the world, and celebrated in the songs of myriads already gathered with the noble Christian warrior among the host that have crossed the flood.

By preaching the Cross, we do not mean a mere dry, ritualistic statement of its doctrine, but a development of its principle—of its hidden and spiritual elements, in all the diversity of their applications, and in all the grandeur of their power. To the dead formal statement our sensual nature is ever prone; and nothing but a constant development of its power in our spiritual nature, and a constant reinvigoration of the intellect, will enable the minister to display the Cross at once in all its simplicity and grandeur.

But we shall here be met with the objection that such a course as we propose would circumscribe and limit our range of thought, till the minister would become a man of one idea—of one text and one

sermon. You will not question that the ministry of St. Paul, of Luther, of Wesley, and of Chalmers, was such as I have here described ; and no one, we presume, will charge that either of them was a man of one text, one sermon, one idea.

But let us look at this *one idea-ism* in this connection. It has been observed, as one of our intellectual tendencies, that the mind ever inclines to repeat its own walks, to travel in its own beaten paths, and thus to restrict the scope of its action, and especially when some peculiar object strikes it with great force. Indeed, there seem to be some minds so constructed that they are constantly marking out circles, beating out a track, through which they may revolve. Their mental vision is so constructed that they can see but one object at a time, and when that occupies the eye they forget there is any thing in the universe besides. Their mental action is on the principle of the *ginglymus*, or hinge-joint, which admits of action only backward and forward. This is the *one idea-ism* that is to be dreaded. It dwarfs the intellect, renders morbid the sensibilities, and consequently circumscribes the influence. It matters little what the one idea may be—whether antislavery on the one hand, or Christian holiness on the other ; it may be warring against the deepest crime, or aspiring after the greatest good our nature can know—yet will the result be the same.

To be a man of one science, however, is a very different thing ; and such is the Christian minister. The professor of natural or mental science may dwarf down till one idea comprehends all his science ;

but this is the defect of the man and not of the subject; and so in every other department—that of theology included. The astronomer, wherever he carries his science in the vastness of the created universe, must ever have his base-line or his starting point upon the globe he inhabits. So of the minister of Christ; wherever he goes, whatever theme he essays, and whoever he addresses, his starting point—the line of all his measurements—must be the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. His is one science, but that science is comprehensive as are the wants of man—glorious as is his destiny.

3. Again; the Christian minister may make the Cross of Christ the one theme of his glorying, by having all his motives, aims, and ends the establishment of Christ's kingdom and the salvation of a dying world.

4. Finally, upon this topic I remark, that in carrying out this great object it will become necessary to resist manfully the strong tendencies of the age to laxness in matters of religious faith and doctrine. In a theological point of view, the strongly-marked tendencies of the present age are to a spurious liberalism of opinion and sentiment, and to an idealistic piety founded upon mere sentiment or feeling. Understand me with reference to this liberalism; it is not a mere concession of the right of opinion to every man. That is a question not necessarily involved in it, and one which it often practically negates; but it asserts the utter worthlessness of all intellectual faith and substitutes mere sentiment or feeling in its place. It professes to have discovered

the true and the good under all forms of belief, whether true or false, and even where no belief exists. A creed, in their view, is a spiritual ice-house, in which the soul chills and freezes, and where its vision is rendered hazy and obscure. It is to the soul what a strait-jacket would be to a sane person, or a tightly-bound ligament to a healthy limb. This is the latest and most insidious development of infidelity, and one that has too often obtained a stealthy foothold within the pale of the Christian Church. Popery had already practically divorced morals from religion; and now we are told that there is no necessary connection between religion and doctrine. It has got to be regarded as a mark of an enlarged and cultivated mind, of a noble and truly-religious nature, that a man is unsectarian, has a most perfect indifference to all forms of faith, if not an utter abhorrence of them; or, on the other hand, is willing to receive them all, professing to analyze and digest them, till, in the final result, he finds they all contain the same elements—or, what is equally well to his purpose, no elements at all. These libertines in religion are like libertines in morals, who affect to regard the marriage tie as the death-warrant of love. They would make a harlot of the Church of God.

Having demolished all creeds, set at naught all formulas of doctrinal faith, the next step is to confound all forms of worship. But this is a lower deep easily reached—nay, of necessity reached from the stand-point that renounces all creeds. The only thing required is *to worship*, it matters not whom or what—

Vishnu, Brahma, Pan, Jehovah, or the unknown God ; it is all *worship*, and goes to the same account. Nor does it matter *how*—whether by the bloody rites of human sacrifice, by the bacchanalian orgies of heathenism, or by the pure flame of Christian devotion. Mr. Parker tells us, with horrible distinctness, that “many a swarthy Indian who bowed down to wood and stone, many a grim-faced Calmuck who worshiped the great god of storms, many a Grecian peasant who did homage to Phœbus Apollo when the sun rose or went down—yes, many a savage, his hands all smeared over with human sacrifice, shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.” The horrible blasphemy of this passage consists not in the expressed confidence that possibly a heathen man may be saved, but in the fact that the most abominable rites—repugnant to all the moral instincts of the soul, and denounced by God himself—are transformed into acceptable acts of worship and instruments of the salvation of the soul. Such is the spurious charity of this bastard spiritualism, which claims, *par excellence*, to be the refined religion of the age. When men are so tolerant to the most loathsome vices and the most horrid crimes of heathenism that were ever dignified by the name of worship, one can not but marvel that not one speck of that overflowing charity is ever extended by these men to the simplest and purest forms for the annunciation of Christian faith.

And these are the men who demand the remodeling of the Christian system ! Does a Christian minister demur ? How they pity his narrowness of soul,



his lack of breadth of view, and his want of sympathy with the spirit of the age! How modestly they whisper their concern for Christianity itself, lest through the blindness of its teachers it should become obsolete, and be entirely supplanted by the new and brighter views that are dawning upon the intellect of the age! They address the Church as their great prototype addressed its Master—"Cast thyself down"—and for an equally benevolent purpose.

But then these men are vastly pious. The infidelity of the present age is a baptized infidelity. O, how they discourse of inspiration! how they vindicate the spirit from its deadening alliance to the letter! But sound the mystery of their inspiration, and it is an undefinable, impalpable consciousness—an inspiration which every man has within himself, and which renders all written revelation from God unnecessary and absurd. And their divorcement of the spirit from the soul-killing thralldom of the letter is nothing more than a negation of the authority of the Bible—a dethroning of God, and an enthroning of self. They profess great homage for Christ, are wonderful admirers of his character and life; but it is only as the *ideal of humanity*, and not as God and Redeemer. They admire the fervor and earnestness of the piety of former ages—that of Luther, of Wesley, and of sturdy old John Knox—and place in vehement contrast the lifelessness and cant of the orthodoxy of the present age. And yet so transparent is their base hypocrisy that they do not even conceal their utter aversion to those truths which were the life-blood of that earnest piety. Advancing

a step further they begin to hint their dissent from what they are pleased to term the Bible idolatry of our fathers; then they adopt lower views of inspiration, display their candor by admitting the defects, difficulties, and contradictions found in the Bible; they attempt to develop philosophically the old-fashioned doctrines found in it and heartily believed by the apostles and holy men of former ages. Nay, displaying their candor still further, with most patronizing condescension they admit that the authors of the Bible were good, well-meaning men, far in advance of the age in which they lived; but that a new era has brought in a new and larger development, which is destined to correct all former errors. And thus they come down at last upon the dead level of infidelity; and we discover that this boasted spiritualism, which is to reform Christianity and bless the earth, is, after all, only the patched-up tatters into which ancient deism was torn in its earlier conflicts with Christianity.

Against this tendency of the age a bulwark must be raised. The Church of Christ is the conservative power that is to hold it in check, and the preaching of the Cross is yet to cure this raging malady. The Church is the ark of God's covenant to a dying world. Amid the tumult of the rushing waves there shall she stand like a mighty rock in mid-ocean; the waves dash against it, but in vain; the sediment and the sea-weed of the yeasty deep again and again beslime its bold form, and the spray sometimes dashes high above it. But there it stands, the same old rock, beaten and worn by the winds and waves

of eighteen centuries; but the gates of hell have not prevailed against it. No fear for the Church; she has eternal truth for her foundation—God for her builder. In majesty and glory shall the Divine fabric rise to its completion, till the top stone is brought to crown the whole with *shoutings of grace, grace, unto it!* Then shall the Cross of Christ have attained its full measure of victory, and Christ crucified shall be enthroned in the breasts of the redeemed on earth and the glorified in heaven. Whatever else we can afford to surrender, we may not dispense with the Cross of Christ; it is the banner under which the Church marches forth to the world's conquest, and under this sign shall she conquer!

In concluding these remarks, already too extended, allow me to make two practical suggestions; one by way of caution, the other by way of encouragement.

1. First, then, let us beware of those seductive influences that would allure us from the Cross of Christ. Besides the ordinary temptations that beset the Christian's path, there are peculiar ones that assail the Christian minister. Does the power of the Cross in our hearts subside?—how heavy to bear does it become! It is then that the beautiful in literature supplants the love of the Cross, and our sermons become rhetorical or literary essays that are utterly powerless to affect the heart, to stir up the conscience, or to convert the soul. Have we a lack of moral firmness, of Christian adhesion, if I may use the word?—then are we often forced away from the Cross by the pressure from without. Are we prone to speculation?—then shall we be in danger

of ever being unsettled upon the cardinal principles of the Cross: our congregations may be amazed, perhaps bewildered, by our display of subtile theories, and our nice distinctions, and our critical exegeses; but their souls will be unfed and unsaved. Are we ambitious of science, of philosophy?—let us beware of its spoiling influence. “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.” Reason, philosophy, literature, science, have their sphere and their important parts in the grand theater of human development. Let them count the stars of heaven, let them solve the mysteries of nature, let them develop the resources of art, and display what is glorious in intellect; but when you come to the grand question, one that overtops and outweighs all the rest, “How shall a man be just with his God?” reason must be silent and God himself must speak.

This is the great peril of the age, and one that is fraught with peculiar danger to young men; a tendency on the part of philosophy to enter the domain of revelation, and of reason to usurp the authority of faith.

Let us illustrate this spoiling influence of philosophy in two particulars. It takes hold of the *atonement* and affects to consider Christ the wisest and best of men, our teacher, our pattern, and the noblest martyr to truth. But how infinitely does all this fall below the glorious old Bible doctrine, “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, and hath redeemed us unto God!” Philosophy, falsely so called,

would place Jesus by the side of Confucius, and Zoroaster, and Plato ; but unsophisticated revelation would enthrone him as God, and give him all power on earth and in heaven. So also in relation to *prayer*: human reason would say that its only virtue is in its reacting influence upon the soul of the individual and upon those who may hear, and that to expect any other answer to prayer is unphilosophical and absurd ; but, on the other hand, God says, *Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will answer*. Such is the spoiling influence of that philosophy which, even now, like an evil atmosphere, surrounds us, tainting our literature with a spiritual miasma, and breathing its deadly influence through all our moral nature. If we would vindicate our claim to the character of the ministers of Christ, we must maintain the truth undiluted by foreign admixtures ; we must, like the apostle, determine to know only Christ Jesus and him crucified.

2. Finally, let us be encouraged to glory only in the Cross of Christ, by the certainty of the success and the glory of the reward it insures. Under the most inauspicious circumstances in which the preaching of Christ crucified may be placed—let it be discarded by the world, sneered at as being behind the age ; let it be supplanted or distanced by the bold assumptions and the philosophic deductions of unsanctified reason—still the minister of Christ has his one commission to fulfill : that commission stands unrevoked ; it extends to “every creature,” and endures till “the end of the world.” If, then, we are surrounded by all these most depressing and discouraging

circumstances, still would every consideration of the high authority of Heaven bind us to preach Christ crucified, and him only, to a dying world ; and amid all our want of success, we should be sustained in the conviction that we had done our duty—had executed our commission. But we are not left to so painful a resort.

Has the Cross ever been successful in bringing men to God?—it possesses now the same power, and is working the same results. When, in all the history of the Church, has she ever had spread out before her so wide and so promising a theater for her operations? Christianity seems like a ubiquitous influence girdling the entire globe ; it has entered the domain of science, and subjugated its facts and its discoveries to its own use ; it has diffused itself into the systems of education and into the literature of the age ; the enterprise, art, commerce, and wealth of the world are all made tributary to its onward march and its final success. The time of its triumph is hastening on ; and ere long the mighty shout shall peal through earth and heaven, “The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ.”

We, as Christian ministers, my brethren, may be subjected to wearing toil, to discouraging hardships, and to painful privations ; but the glory of success, the eternity of the reward, shall infinitely compensate for all sacrifice, toil, and suffering. To stand among the glorified in heaven—redeemed, sanctified, saved by the blood of Christ—will be bliss indeed ; but to stand there, as our lately-departed beloved

brother\*—to whose untiring zeal and heavenly devotedness we all are witnesses—now stands, blessed by the grateful benedictions of the souls saved by our ministry, and above all, by the approving smile of our God—O, that will be a bliss which will make our present toils and trials appear insignificant indeed. Let me but contribute to hasten the final and glorious triumph of Christ's kingdom on earth—let me but contribute to swell the mighty host of exulting immortals, redeemed and purified by the blood of Christ, and I will know no other ambition! To have contributed but an atom to this vast aggregate of purity and bliss—this fathomless ocean of immortal felicity, shall afford us joy when earthly honors and riches have perished, and crowns, and thrones have been swept away in eternal oblivion.

Let us then, my brethren, in our ministry, know only Christ Jesus and him crucified—let us glory only in the Cross; let its mighty inspiration swell our hearts; let its wondrous theme be the grand burden of all our preaching; so shall we at last, like our dear brethren who have fallen during the past year,† peacefully welcome the day of our release from the toils of life's warfare, and amid the welcomes of angels and of glorified spirits enter upon our everlasting reward.

\* Rev. Daniel Smith was buried in the cemetery a few rods from the church.

† Revs. D. Smith, T. Osborn, W. F. Brenner, H. Humphries, and Charles W. Carpenter.

## IV.

## FAITH IN GOD.

*"Have faith in God."* Mark xi, 22.

THE incidents connected with our text, and which give special significance to it, occurred during the week of the Passover, and at that season of the year when the figs of Palestine were just ripening for the harvest. As our Savior, with his disciples, was journeying along the road from Bethany to Jerusalem, he became hungry. In the distance, and standing upon the highway, he beheld a fig-tree. It was in full leaf. As the fig-tree puts forth its fruit before its leaves, and as "the time of figs"—that is, the time for gathering them—"was not yet," there was every reason, humanly speaking, to expect fruit upon the tree. But the rich promise held out to the eye in the foliage was not realized. The tree was found to be barren. Then was pronounced the curse upon it—"No man eat fruit of thee hereafter forever;" and immediately, as though smitten by some destroying pestilence, the tree withered away.

On the following day, as they again passed along the same road, the disciples were filled with astonishment at beholding the tree "withered away," and even "dried up from the roots." When they called



the Savior's attention to it, he applied the lesson he had designed to teach them, in the terse yet expressive language of our text—"have faith in God."

This transaction, viewed simply as a miracle, is incumbered with difficulties. All the other miracles of our Savior were acts of beneficence, of love; they were acts of healing, of opening the eyes of the blind, unstopping the ears of the deaf, causing the lame man to leap as an hart, and of restoring the dead to life. But this was an act of punishment, of wrath, of destruction. Then, too, it was visited upon an object which had no moral character or responsibility, and could therefore incur no guilt. If, then, this is to be regarded as a miracle only, it stands alone among all the miracles of Christ; it is the only miracle of destruction performed by him. It is also at marked variance with all his other miracles, and, indeed, with his whole life and character; for he came "not to destroy, but to fulfill."

But the moment we come to look upon it as a symbolical transaction, all our difficulties vanish, and it is freighted with the richest instruction. That fig-tree had already advanced so far in the process of decay, and its vital sap was so far exhausted, that it could put forth only leaves, and perhaps a few sickly blossoms that had already perished. It was already in a dying condition. The curse pronounced upon it suddenly consummated a result which was natural and inevitable. Thus was symbolized the Jewish Church at that moment—rich in the foliage of pomp and ceremony, but destitute of that sap of spiritual life, *faith in God*, which alone could cause it to bring

forth fruit. As the destruction of the fig-tree was precipitated by the curse pronounced upon it, so also was foreshadowed the coming ruin of the Jewish Church, because it lacked this essential element of spiritual life.

To the disciples this transaction was pregnant with the most sublime teaching. They were to be the founders and ministers of the New Church. To them was to be committed the responsibility of its planting and training. It was for that reason that Christ placed before them this picture of the old theocracy, robed in pomp and resplendent in its ceremonial, yet shorn of its power, and crumbling into ruin. What could impress upon their minds more deeply the necessity of faith in God!

Through this transaction Christ speaks also to his ministers and to his Church, every-where and at all times, admonishing us of the necessity of having faith in God. With a force and an impressiveness that no language could equal, he admonishes us that *faith* rather than ceremony, *fruit* rather than leaf and foliage, will be the characteristic of a living Christian and a living Church. May God make us such Christians and such a Church!

We propose to notice the foundation, nature, and fruits of faith in God.

*I. What, then, we inquire in the first place, is the foundation on which our faith is to rest? or, in other words, why should we have faith in God?*

1. *First, because God is.* "He that cometh to God must believe that he is;" else how could he approach him? With what heart, or faith, or hope

could he call unto him? We need not now elaborate the great arguments which settle, in the eye of reason, the question of the Godhead. Only let the mind, along with the consciousness of its own weakness and dependence, comprehend the great truth that *God is*, and it will also come to feel the necessity of faith in him. We may not be able to comprehend God; clouds and darkness may be round about him; the greatness and glory of his attributes may be beyond our finite capacity; the principles of his government may be inadequately comprehended—yet, at the very moment we come to comprehend that *God is*, there is laid upon us the necessity of having faith in him. This is that spontaneous, instinctive faith with which our common humanity gropes after God—in darkness and in fear it may be—and strives to cling to the Unseen and the Eternal.

2. But, again, the *attributes of God, as revealed in his Word*, furnish ground for faith in him. They show that he is a being in whom we may trust. Take the infinite *knowledge and wisdom* of God. The wisest of earth, however kindly affectioned, may fail to comprehend all the facts in any given case, however vast its moment, and may therefore err in judgment. Not so with God, for he “seeth under the whole heaven,” and “his understanding is infinite.” The most skillful physician may mistake the nature of our disease, and fail to apply the appropriate remedy. Not so with the Great Physician of souls; he comprehendeth all thy malady, and he, too, knoweth how to apply the sovereign remedy. The kindest and best of earthly parents, through failing

to comprehend the right modes of discipline and training, or through mistaken notions of the character and adaptation of their children, may fail to secure for them the good they would desire. But, thanks to his name, our Heavenly Father knoweth all our wants. He knoweth the discipline, the chastisement we need, and he will not stay his hand. He knows our feebleness, and the helps we need, and he will not withhold his aid. Child of God, thy Father is never absent from thee on a journey, never weary, never asleep; he counts every footstep thou takest in thy long and weary pilgrimage; not a sorrow that weighs down thy heart, and not a sigh that heaves thy breast escapes his notice; not a peril besets thy path, and not a cloud dims thine eye that he has not searched out and shall not remove if thou lookest unto him. For "his eyes run to and fro throughout the whole earth to show himself strong in behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him."

Then, again, God is *almighty in power*. "Thou hast made the heavens and the earth by thy great power and stretched-out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee." Without power to execute the plans of wisdom would be of little avail. To the exercise of human power there are a thousand hindrances. But who shall stay the hand of the Almighty when it is girded with power? It may reach our extremest want with abundant supply, and no obstacle can thwart his purpose, for "there is nothing too hard" for Him who made the heaven and earth by his great power and outstretched arm.

Then, also, *truth and faithfulness* are with God.

Without these attributes, whatever of wisdom or of power he might possess, we could not trust in him. His wisdom might end in craftiness and deceive us; his power might crush us. But he is "a God of truth and without iniquity." "He keepeth truth forever." "He keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations." No wonder that the Psalmist cries out, "Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne; mercy and truth shall go before thy face."

Then, again, God is *unchangeable*. He is not like man, every day changing in his thoughts, his feelings, his plans, his character. What he was in ages that are past he is now, and will be forever. How sublime is the immutability of God as uttered by the Psalmist! "Of old hast thou laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; they shall wax old like a garment, but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end," cii, 25. Friends may change and desert us, but, thanks be to God, he is an unchanging friend. Are the most powerful as well as the wisest pledged to confer favors upon us?—riches, honor, power? After all, how uncertain is our trust in them! Their own power may be broken, their riches melt away, and their own honors fade like the morning vapor. Nay, they may change in their purposes, may prove unfaithful in their promises, and in our greatest extremity may desert us. The poor man "that hangs on princes' favors may in his old age be left a prey to

penury and want. But not so with God, for "as the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people from henceforth even forever." Psalm cxxv, 2.

Take the *omnipresence* of God. He is never beyond hearing; never so far away that our faith can not reach up to him, and his hand reach down to us; never so weary that he can not come to our relief. "If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand hold me." Psalm cxxxix, 8-10. But dearer than all among the attributes of Divinity, because it brings hope to condemned and despairing sinners, is *God's goodness and mercy*. "He is good to all." Psalm cxlv, 9. "The earth *is full* of his goodness." Psalm xxxiii, 5.

Such are some of the Divine attributes. Survey them again; see how they co-work to establish a broad and abiding foundation for our faith in God. His knowledge and wisdom exclude the possibility of error or mistake on his part; his truth and faithfulness give assurance that he will not deceive us; his power is to us the pledge that he is able to execute all his plans and fulfill all his promises; his unchangeableness is the pledge that we may rely upon him not only in the present, but for all the limitless ages of the future; his omnipresence is the pledge that he will never be absent from us in the time of our need. And then the infinite goodness of the Most High! how does it come down to spread

a halo of ineffable brightness over all the other attributes of his character. It is the pledge that all the attributes of the Godhead, whether of wisdom, of truth, or of power, shall be exerted for the defense of those that put their trust in him. No wonder that the Psalmist exclaimed, "They that know thy name"—thine attributes, the glory of thy character—"will put their trust in thee," ix, 10. No wonder that the wise man, after all his varied experience, should declare, "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it and is safe." Proverbs xviii, 10. And no wonder that holy men in all ages have been inspired by the vision of the Divine attributes in all their majesty and glory, rising up around them—an invincible rampart for their defense, a citadel of refuge and safety. And thus inspired, they could exclaim, "The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid? In the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion; in the secret of his tabernacle he shall hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock." Psalm xxvii, 1-5.

3. Again, God's manifested providence, or the history of his dealings with the children of men, furnishes a warrant for the exercise of faith in him. Whatever of admiration, of reverence, or of love we might have had for God, or of faith in him, from the abstract knowledge of his being and attributes, when we come to see those divine energies of the Godhead employed so beneficently, so mercifully, and so effectively in behalf of weak, and suffering, and sinful man, we can not but feel that we have additional reason for faith. Thus Joshua confirmed the faith

of God's ancient people. "Ye know," said he, "in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one hath failed thereof." Chronicles xxiii, 14. And so the Psalmist, overwhelmed with sorrows, exclaims with a grieved and doubting heart, "Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? Is his mercy clean gone forever?" Just then there comes up a memory of the past, a memory of wonderful deliverances for the people of God, and, taking courage, he cries out, "I will remember his wonders of old."

No where in all the ages that are past hath God failed to erect monuments of his judgment and justice, and also of his care and love, so that the fear of his wrath might restrain the wicked, and the assurance of his care inspire the faith of his children. Let your eye run along through all the ages of Divine forbearance and mercy. What long-suffering endurance with infirmities, follies, and sins! what compassion for the sorrowing and suffering! what mighty deliverances for those who have trusted in the living God! what steadfastness in the Divine promises, even to a thousand generations! The time of fulfillment may often seem to be long delayed, and the restless soul may cry out, "How long, O Lord, how long?" or, wearied and despairing, it may cry in distress and fear, "Hath God forgotten to be gracious? doth his promise fail for evermore?" Psalm lxxvii, 7, 8. But lo! when all the plans of Divine



mercy were fulfilled, at an unexpected moment, and when the very darkness of despair seemed blotting out all hope, God has appeared, the strong deliverer of them that trusted in him. Does the Almighty meditate vengeance upon a world filled with violence? The floods are staid till Noah enters the ark. Or, does a Lot dwell in Sodom? The swift angel is sent for his deliverance before the consuming wrath of Heaven descends upon the cities of the plain. Does a David flee before the envy of a Saul? The shield of the Almighty protects him. Does an Elijah hide himself in the desert? The ravens bring him food. Is a Daniel cast into the lions' den? The lions forget their thirst for blood. Or are the three worthies cast into the fiery furnace? Not only does the fire forget to burn, but the form of the fourth, like unto the Son of God, walks with them through the flame. Even if the Father of mercies sees it is best not to send *deliverance*, yet does he send strength to *endure*. The "thorn in the flesh" may not be removed, but there shall come down the blessed assurance of our Heavenly Father, "My grace is sufficient for thee." And is a Job overwhelmed with calamities from which there is no deliverance? Like the suffering saints of God in all ages, conscious of the presence and support of the Divine Helper, he is enabled in holy triumph to exclaim, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."

And then, too, as if to fix and establish our faith, the Almighty has been pleased to connect with the sublimest act of his grace the most enduring witness of the steadfastness of the Divine promises. When

sin had entered our world, and the condemnation of death by sin, God was pleased to give the promise of a coming Savior. That promise wreathed the brow of our first parents with light and hope. But who could have conceived the stretch of centuries over which it was to reach to its fulfillment? Those to whom it was made, after the long centuries of their age are past, go down to the grave with the promise unrealized. The patriarchs come upon the stage, live in hope, but die without having seen the promised Deliverer of the race. The race multiplies and spreads out over the earth, but no Savior any where appears. The ages roll on amid change and transformation. Cities are founded in the once desolate places ; they swell their commerce, rise in opulence and power, build their palaces of beauty and their towers of strength ; and then, in the lapse of ages, decline and waste away, or are overwhelmed by the desolations of war, till the very sites on which they stood have become a desolation. Already, a hundred generations have lived and died, and the earth has become hoary with the lapse of four thousand years of sin and suffering ; when suddenly, and in the darkest night of man's gloom and sorrow, the key-note of the mighty Advent is sounded by angels proclaiming glad tidings of great joy to despairing humanity on earth, and glory to God in heaven. Blessed be God, he keepeth truth and mercy forever. Man may forget, may change, but God never. That little promise, recorded in the archives of eternity, living in the faith of God's people from age to age, though lingering to its fulfillment four thousand years ; yet through all that

period events were marching onward to its consummation with a steadiness and a certainty which demonstrate the unfailing purpose of God.

4. Redemption is also a foundation for faith in God. If we have found grounds for our faith in the attributes of God, and in his providential acts, how much more shall we find them in the gift of his Son for our redemption! Never did the apostle wield a logic more invincible, or mount on the wings of a faith more seraphic than when he gave utterance to the sublime declaration, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things." Rom. viii, 32. This is the *quod erat demonstrandum*—the grand demonstration of the Gospel to our faith. Its burden is—if God spared not the greater sacrifice when we were rebellious and sinning, surely he will not withhold the lesser blessing when we are penitent and believing. Ye darkened, doubting souls, despairing of the Divine mercy, saying in your hearts—"how can it be possible that God should condescend to one so unworthy, so vile as I?"—let your faith take hold of that great problem: If God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us ALL—for me—even for my poor soul, surely with him he is willing to give *us*—to give ME—all things. How can a soul—no matter how dark, or guilty, or hell-deserving—how can a soul grasp hold of this great truth and comprehend its significance, and feel its conclusiveness and its power, without realizing that it has a foundation for faith in God?

A son, beloved of his father, has unfortunately

wandered away from his home ; the advantages of birth and education are lost upon him. But now, as the fruit of his evil doing, he pines in bondage in a foreign land. Barbarians have manacled him, and compelled him to nameless drudgery of body, and to nameless degradation of soul. The father hears of the condition of his son ; he sends to him the promise of redemption. Then he stops at no sacrifice of time, of labor, or of means that he may accomplish his purpose. He is willing to expend his whole estate ; with ungrudging liberality the ransom is paid, and the son is free. Can he now doubt whether that father is willing to receive him ? Why, the very fact that he has redeemed him is demonstration of this. The poor prodigal, who said, "I will arise and go to my father," had no such foundation on which to rest as this. He had no promise of reception from his father ; no invitation even to come back to his forsaken home. But he knew that there was tenderness, compassion in the heart of that father. Building his hope upon this he ventured to come back, and joyful was the hour of his return. So, trembling sinner, "have faith in God ;" fear not. Come back to thy Father ; every obstacle to thy return is taken out of the way : every needed help is pledged. Thy Father bids thee come. Look upon the wondrous act of redemption, and in that behold the unfailing pledge of Divine mercy to thy soul. Why not, then, have faith in God ?

And, O my brethren, let us stand here as Moses stood in the mount of God ; the Divine attributes rise up around us ; the wondrous faithfulness of God,

how glorious ; and then, too, the wondrous display of his mercy in redemption ! O how they inspire the soul with faith, and nerve the heart with trust ! Blessed be God for such a foundation ! It is a tried foundation ! The storms have howled around it ; the waves have beat upon it ; but glory to his name, “ the foundation of God standeth sure.” Standing upon it, the goodly company of patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs, and the saints of all ages, have weathered all the storms of life, and triumphed at last.

“ Fix’d on this ground will I remain,  
Though my heart fail, and flesh decay ;  
This anchor will my soul sustain  
When earth’s foundations melt away ;  
Mercy’s full power I then shall prove,  
Loved with an everlasting love.”

*II. We come now, in the second place, to inquire with regard to the nature of faith ; what is it to have faith in God ?*

1. It is impossible to overrate the importance of this inquiry, and the necessity of a just discrimination as to the nature of a rational and Scriptural faith in God. In no age of the world was this discrimination more essential than at this moment. For now the very infidels profess to have faith in God. The men who reject the Divine authority of Revelation, and build upon the foundation of their own reason—the skeptics, rationalists, neologists, deists, and even the “ spirit-rappers,” who are a standing burlesque upon both reason and religion—all claim to have faith in God ; and if we may credit them, their faith is very strong and very comprehensive.

I fear for them; I would not like to trust in their faith. But when men, some of them reasonable and even learned men, are thus led to substitute the vagaries of the imagination for faith in God, how important it is that we come back to the Bible, and in its light endeavor to ascertain the true nature of that faith which allies the soul to God and heaven!

And then, again, all the promises of God are made to none other than a *true* faith. A bramble-bush can no more bring forth the fruit of a grape-vine than a *false* faith the fruits of a *true*. A counterfeit coin is not received at the bank; no more is a counterfeit faith received in the exchequer of heaven.

We shall not, however, attempt any metaphysical disquisition upon the nature of faith. If there is one topic in the whole range of Christian theology to which metaphysical discussion has done eminent disservice it is this. It has analyzed and classified the different kinds and degrees of faith, making discriminations difficult to be understood, till the whole subject seems to many minds to be involved in the deepest and most inexplicable mystery.

2. *What, then, is faith?* We propose to meet and cover the whole question with a simple definition. Faith is to *credit God's word and act as if it were true*. This is simple, and yet it is comprehensive. We repeat it—*to exercise faith in God is to credit his word and act as if it were true*.

How, then, can it be difficult to comprehend the nature of faith? I am a wanderer and an alien, reduced to poverty and destitution, naked, and hungry,

and perishing; a kind friend comes to my rescue; he invites me to his home, and from his abundance he proposes to supply all my wants if I will consent to come. Do I find it difficult to comprehend what is implied in *crediting his word and acting as if it were true*? I am sick, racked with pain, fainting, dying; a skillful physician points out the nature of my disease, prescribes the remedy, and bids me apply it. Can I fail to comprehend what is implied in crediting his word and acting as if it were true? And are we not wanderers and aliens—naked, hungry, and destitute? and does not our Friend come to us in sympathy and invite us to his Father's house, that we may be no longer aliens and strangers? He points out our way; he tells us that the fatted calf is already slain, that the best robe is provided; he bids us "come." Why may not even a child comprehend what it is to credit that message and act as if it were true? And, again, is not the whole head sick and the whole heart faint? Does not the soul in conscious agony cry out, "O, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Behold, the Great Physician is near! Hear him declare, "A fountain is opened;" "There is a balm in Gillead—a physician there!" What though the prescription is simple? Thou hast only to "look," to "will," to "call," and soon with the Psalmist the burden of thy exultant song shall be, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases."

This, then, is faith—to credit God's word and act as if it were true

3. But was there not some more mysterious hidden element in the faith of the saints of old by which they obtained such victories and became approved of heaven and the friends of God? Scan for one moment the faith of the patriarchs. What were the elements of that faith? Of Noah, it is said, "he became the heir of the righteousness which is by faith." How? When the whole earth was filled with violence, and all flesh had corrupted its way, God directed him to build an ark for the saving of himself and his family from the coming deluge which was to overwhelm the whole earth. But what evidence had he that the flood would come and the ark be needed? No evidence from history. For sixteen centuries the course of nature had rolled on, and never had such an event occurred. All experience was against it, for no living man on the face of the globe had ever witnessed such a flood. Science, philosophy brought its testimony against it, and no doubt attempted, as it has often since tried to do, to demonstrate upon scientific principles that such a deluge as would cover the earth was an utter impossibility. The popular conviction and feeling were against it, and regarded the whole matter as the offspring of a disordered brain. And I have no doubt the first beams of that ark were laid amid the jeers and scoffs of unbelieving and wicked men. What evidence had Noah that that deluge would come, and that the ark he was building would not be left as a monument of his folly? History, experience, science, philosophy, and the voice of all living men were combined in their testimony against him.



Yet he toiled on. Days and months go by, but he wearied not. What evidence had he? He had, my friends, the *naked word of God*, and that alone; and through the long period of *one hundred and twenty years*, though all else was against him, he continued to credit the word of God and act as if it were true. Hence has he become the "heir of the righteousness which is by faith."

See how *crediting and acting* combined in the faith of Noah. Had he said, in reply to the Divine command, "O Lord, I know that thou art a God of power and truth, and that thy judgments are sure;" and yet had gone away from God, as sinners have done time and again, and neglected to do the thing commanded, would he not have exposed himself to the peculiar indignation of Heaven; and would not the wrath of the Almighty have swept him away as with the very besom of destruction? An essential and saving element would have been wanting in his faith.

And then, too, note again, how long Noah was left to rely upon the naked word of God. *One hundred and twenty years!* O, my brethren, how shamed is the feebleness of our faith! If God cast trial upon us, afflict us, or leave us without sensible witness, or to be buffeted by our enemies, how soon are we ready to faint by the way! How slow of heart to learn the sublime art—in sunshine and in storm, in joy and in sorrow, in triumph and in defeat—of crediting God's word, and acting as if it were true! And yet, what more does the Christian need?

Again, Abraham not only attained to that right-

eousness which is by faith, but he became "the father of the faithful"—the representative man, who stands forth as the noblest exemplar of faith among men. God says to him, "Get thee out from thy country and thy kindred to a country I shall show thee." He credits God's word, and goes forth, not doubting the promised inheritance and the multiplied seed. God says to him, "Offer up thy son, thine only son, the child of promise;" he falters not, the offering is made, not doubting that God was able to raise him even from the dead. Such was the faith of Abraham.

Time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthah, of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets, who, through firmly crediting God's word, and acting as if it were true, "subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouth of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens." And these all "obtained a good report through faith," and are set forth as our example, that we might comprehend the nature of that simple, yet sublime faith, through whose mighty power the child of God wins victories over all the powers of death and hell.

4. And this brings us to another point; and that is, that our definition is in accordance with the apostolic designation of faith. Or, in other words, it is in harmony with Gospel faith—that faith which justifies and sanctifies the soul. I know that we are prone to think that there must be, in this faith, some

more recondite, hidden, and mysterious element. We have looked at it so long as a sort of abstraction—a complicated metaphysical essence, that our notions of faith are offended at so simple a definition, and one so easy of comprehension. We forget that the Gospel is the very essence of simplicity.

Christ appears, not merely robed in human *form*, but *very man*, not only that we might comprehend the depth and power of his sympathy, but that we might comprehend more fully what it is to credit his word and act as if it were true. We know what it is to credit the words of a father or a friend, whose affection and wisdom we can not doubt, and to act as if those words were true. This is having faith in man. But, surely, when it comes to be our Elder Brother who speaks, *crediting and acting* is all the same—equally simple, equally easy to be understood. And yet, this is having faith in God.

“Faith,” we are told, “cometh by hearing;” and further, that “without faith it is impossible to please God.” And the apostle further declares that “we are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.” Now, the nature of this faith will sufficiently appear, if, with this declaration, we collate the language of the Savior himself. “Blessed are they that hear the word of God and *keep it*,” Luke xi, 28; “If ye *continue* in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed,” John viii, 31. And then again, “My mother and my brother are those which *hear* the word of God and *do it*,” Luke viii, 21. And then, too, in that memorable prayer of our Lord, as he lifts up his disciples into the companionship of the Father’s glory, he says,

“*They have kept thy word.*” John xvii, 6. Thus does our Savior clearly indicate the great elements of a living faith.

But what our Savior clearly *indicates*, St. James fully enunciates: “Yea, a man will say, *Thou hast faith, and I have works*; show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well; the devils also believe and tremble.” James ii, 18, 19. But what is the matter? what is yet wanting? Alas, an element indispensable to a true and living faith is not there. “Wilt thou know, O vain man, that *faith without works is dead*?” Verse 20. It is not merely that it lacks results, lacks fruit, but it lacks vitality—there is no life in it. “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.” Verse 26.

5. Thus have we seen what faith really is; how simple, and yet how divine an element. It is this simple, yet sublime crediting of God’s word, and acting—even under circumstances of darkness and trial, of conflict and of peril—as if it were true; it is through this that the patriarchs and prophets of old won illustrious triumphs for God; it was through this that the noble army of apostles and martyrs fought the good fight; and it is through this that the saints of God, in all ages, have escaped from the pollutions that are in the world, and have been brought up to the companionship of that mighty assemblage which is without fault before the throne of God. We may speak of the faith that justifies, and of that which sanctifies; we may speak of the faith of the sinner,

and that of the saint ; but, after all, as there is but one God and one revelation, so is there but one faith, and that is to credit God's word and act as if it were true.

Remember then, my friends, that to have faith in God is not to credit a mere abstraction, or a mere essence, or a dead principle, but a living personality. It is not to obey an impulse, but a revelation. It is not to trust in the words of men, nor in their interpretations, nor in their vagaries, but in the words of the living God. The enthusiast wants a dream ; a vision ; a personal revelation. The fickle and thoughtless would seek for something tangible to the senses ; would rely upon the suggestions of friends ; upon the words of the minister ; or be moved by the prevailing current of influences around them. How many of such character flatter themselves that they have faith in God ! Alas, their faith is as empty as a bubble, and as unsubstantial as a dream.

But some one will say, "The Bible is a general revelation ; I need something to meet my particular case." Beloved friends, it is the glory of revelation that while it is general, it is also very particular. It covers every case by its very breadth of generalization. A special revelation to meet particular exigencies would be useless after the occasion that called for it had passed by. Such a revelation, therefore, would fail of the great ends for which God's word has been given ; while at the same time it would perplex and incumber by the unending multitude of revelations given. Suppose our Lord should revisit the earth, and we should come into his presence,

could he add a single word to the revelation he has already given? We confess to him our guilt; tell him we are exposed to ruin; and then ask him how we shall escape. Will he not say to us, "It is already placed upon record—'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved?'" We are in affliction, sorrows compass us about, and we pour our complaints into his ear, and ask, "Gracious Lord, what hast thou to say unto me?" Behold, with what tenderness he replies, "To meet your case, I have already written, 'Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee.'" We go to him again; we are burdened with sins, wearied, and just ready to faint in the way; we make our appeal to the blessed Jesus once more. Hear him reply, "Did I not while yet upon earth send out the invitation, 'Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest?'" No, no, my friends, we need no special revelation; that which has been given is all-comprehending. It meets every case. Christ is saying now unto us, as he once said to the sister of Lazarus, "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?"

There is also another mistake we should here correct. When the question is asked, "Have I faith in God?" how many begin to inquire preparatory to its answer, "Have I joy? have I peace? have I assurance? is God reconciled?" Thus they are led away from the real and vital question. Faith *brings* reconciliation, *brings* peace, *brings* joy; but in itself it is not reconciliation, nor peace, nor joy. Faith is the cause, these are the results. If, then, you would

ascertain whether you have faith in God, you may go behind all these questions; you may bring yourself to the one naked issue—"Do I credit God's word and act from the deep persuasion of its truth?" Nothing short of this is faith in God.

"Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees,  
And looks to that alone;  
Laughs at impossibilities,  
And cries, "It shall be done!"

Such a faith is rooted and grounded. It has no questionings. "*Said I not unto thee?*" sounds forth from every page of Revelation, and to know that it is God's voice and God's word is enough. It settles all possible questions about results; it silences all doubts, removes all fear. O, for such a faith as this!—a faith that will enable us in triumph to say,

"The thing surpasses all my thought;  
But faithful is my Lord;  
Through unbelief I stagger not,  
For God hath spoke the word."

III. It now only remains for us, in conclusion, to notice some of the fruits or practical results of this faith. It is not a barren fig-tree standing in the high-way; but, planted in the garden of our God, its boughs bend beneath the ripening fruit borne for the healing of the soul.

1. *One of its earliest fruits is reconciliation and union with God.* Even in human and civil society faith is an indispensable bond of union. In the domestic relations, unless the husband has faith in the wife and the wife in the husband, the parents in the children and the children in the parents, brothers

in sisters and sisters in brothers, there can be no peace nor happiness in the home. Shut out mutual faith from among the members of the family and there can be no union, no *home joy*; you convert that home into a pandemonium. It may be a stately palace, it may be the scene of luxury and feasting, but the angelic ministries that constitute the brightness of home are not there; and it is not *home*, but a hell of misery. The neighbor must have faith in his neighbor, or there can be no good communion among neighbors. The citizen must have faith in the ruler and the ruler must have faith in the citizen, or the only bond of union between them will be that of power on the part of the former to crush and hold in subjection the latter. Faith, then, is not only a rational principle, but also a rational necessity. Xenophon represents Cyrus as saying, "I know that neither the gods nor good men can be propitious to such as distrust them." Such is the testimony of even a heathen philosopher to the necessity of faith.

Even among men the most assiduous outward service can never answer as a substitute for faith. A *right* outward service from a *wrong* heart can never reconcile you to an enemy. There is philosophy, then, as well as revelation, in the declaration that "without faith it is impossible to please God." Right willing is he to help our feeble endeavors, to strengthen our weak faith, and to encourage all our efforts to come unto him. But he looketh upon the heart; he must find faith there. Nor is it a mere arbitrary demand on his part; it is as essential to the redemption of the soul as gravitation is to keep



the planet in its orbit. Nor is faith in God temporary—limited to our deliverance from sin. It is not even contingent upon the fall and sinfulness of man ; but it is a necessity growing out of our finite and limited nature. It antedated the fall—nay, it antedated even the creation of man, for it is necessary even to the angels of God. In fine, it is essential to any and every finite and dependent creature in the universe of God.

Without an atonement, faith in God on the part of sinful and fallen man would be an impossibility. There would be no foundation on which it could rest, and no word of promise to which it could cling. But *with* an atonement, salvation *without* faith would be impossible, for it would involve the *union* of elements which are in essential and eternal antagonism. No, no, my friends, there can be no union with God—no reconciliation—without faith.

2. *Faith in God exerts a transforming influence upon the character.* Whatever may be the nature or subject of a man's faith, that faith is not without its influence upon himself. A man has faith in the pleasures of sense, in the lying vanities of the world. He imagines that in them is to be found the *summum bonum* of life. His character is transformed, and then you see the base sensualist, the hard, unfeeling miser, the man of vaulting ambition. The elements of his character seem all changed—the good has been lost and the evil has become predominant. One man has faith in the plottings of rebellion, and soon he becomes a traitor ; his love of country is all gone ; his very manhood suffers wreck ; he becomes guilty

of untold crimes, and his name is covered with infamy. Another has faith in the integrity and power of his government; it makes him a patriot, and upon the field of strife and blood he vindicates her honor and avenges her wrong.

So in the Christian life. Our transformation from sin to holiness is by the work of faith. Every trial endured and surmounted, every temptation overcome, every victory gained over foes without and foes within, every advancement from one degree of holiness to another, and every consolation coming up amid the dreary wastes of adversity and sorrow—are so many demonstrations in the Christian life that “this is the victory which overcometh the world, even our faith.”

3. *Faith is the source of spiritual power.* The apostle tells us that “faith is the *substance* of things hoped for and the *evidence* of things not seen.” By “*substance*” we understand *confident expectation*—such a certainty as *almost borders upon realization*. The word “*evidence*,” as here used, implies a *perfect persuasion*; the thing is proved, settled, fixed, and grounded. The man who has such a faith as this, and who is thus allied to God, receives *power from on high*. He is not only strong *in* faith, but he is made strong by faith. He somehow becomes invested, as it were, with the very attributes of God. One of the disciples inquired, “Lord, *how* is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us and not unto the world?” That disciple had not then fathomed the sublime mystery of faith. I can imagine that when on the day of Pentecost his soul caught the inspiration of

the heavenly flame, and he felt that, though a wondrous tongue of fire mantled his brow, yet a more wonderful power filled his soul—I can well imagine that he then knew *how* the blessed Redeemer would manifest himself unto his saints and not unto the world.

“Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem till *ye be endued with power from on high.*” No unmeaning words were these. On the day of Pentecost the disciples received that power. And, thanks be to God, its fountain is not yet exhausted! “Ye shall receive *power*, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you.” Beloved, even now, after the lapse of eighteen hundred years, the Holy Ghost still continues to perform the same office in the heart of the believer. Every faculty is illuminated, every affection purified, every gift and grace ennobled, and the believing Christian is “endowed with power from on high.”

This power is *felt in the heart*. No voice from the skies may announce it; no visible flame, as on the day of Pentecost, may display its presence to the eye of sense; but the soul is at once conscious that it is the touch of God and the inspiration of his power. Such a soul is mighty in prayer. Like St. James, his prayer of faith will “save the sick.” Like that of Carvosso, it will lift the agonizing, despairing sinner from the profound depths of his darkness up into the radiant sunlight of redeeming love.

The minister that has it is mighty in preaching. He may not be elegant in speech or logical in argument, but his ministry will be in demonstration of

the Spirit and with power. Nothing, my brethren, will answer as a substitute for this. A man may possess all the gifts of nature and all the graces of oratory, his gestures may charm, his language entrance, his utterance may be pathetic, his tears may flow, but after all, if it is a fire of his own kindling, there will be no power to convert the soul. There may be *light*, but, alas, there is no heat. And you might as well attempt to thaw the polar ice with an unwarmed sunbeam as to melt the sinner's heart by a ministration which lacks the burning energy of the Holy Ghost. O, for men instinct with the spirit of the living God to rise up and lead forward the sacramental hosts of God's elect to glorious victory!

The Church that has this power will be an aggressive, a growing Church. It may be poor in worldly wealth, feeble in social position and influence, possessing little worldly learning or talent—nay, it may be despised and set at naught, its very name be a by-word and a scoffing among men, but it will have *power*. The blessed God will dwell in her midst—her light, her strength, and her joy.

4. *Faith insures the heavenly triumph.* It is the seraph's pinion that bears the good man to the skies. It is the bridge cast by Heaven's mercy across the deep and broad gulf that separates between earth and heaven; broad enough, and strong enough, for all the ransomed millions of earth to cross over and be forever blest. "Through faith the elders obtained a good report;" through faith the goodly company of the saints and martyrs have triumphed over all the conflicts of life and gained heaven at last; and it is

through the same faith that the weakest child of God shall yet come up out of great tribulation—with robes washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb.

Finally, suffer the word of exhortation. Let me say to you, my hearers, as the Savior said to his disciples, “have faith in God.” *Sinner*, would you cross the deep and broad gulf which separates between you and the Divine favor? would you find deliverance from your guilt, your condemnation? is holiness, is heaven desirable for your soul? then, *have faith in God*.

Christian, wouldst thou triumph over sin and death? wouldst thou have all thy spiritual foes crushed beneath thy feet? wouldst thou see the full revelation of thy God in thy soul, and live and love when sin is all destroyed? then *have faith in God*.

And, O, if the Church of Jesus Christ would see the Gospel spreading; the Redeemer’s kingdom triumphing; sinners coming home to God, then must she clothe herself with the mighty power of a living faith. May our deep and earnest prayer be, like that of the disciples of old, “Lord, increase our faith!” When the whole Church shall comprehend, in all its plenitude, what it is to *have faith in God*, from that moment her march shall be onward. Nothing can withstand her progress. The combined powers of darkness shall give way; the armies of the aliens shall be put to flight; victory shall perch every-where upon the banners of King Immanuel. Then shall dawn the day of millennial glory, whose brightness shall disperse every shade of darkness, and shed the life-giving influence of the Cross over every

continent and every island on the face of the whole earth.

Thou King Immanuel—God with us—hasten the triumph and the glory of that blessed day. Let its mighty flame be kindled in our hearts even now ; so shall our lives henceforth be one exultant song of praise, and we shall attest indeed that *this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.*

## V.

## THE SUPREME AFFECTION.

*"Lovest thou me more than these?"* John xxi, 15.

IN the original, as well as in the English translation, there is a slight ambiguity in the word "these" in the text. It may be either in the masculine gender and refer to *persons*, or it may be in the neuter gender and refer to *things*.

2. If in the former, it would have reference to the other disciples, and our Savior would be made to say to Simon Peter, "Lovest thou me more than these other disciples love me?" Before our Lord's crucifixion Peter had made professions of superior attachment to him: "Though all men"—or rather, though all the other disciples—"should be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended," Matthew xxvi, 33; and yet no one, except Judas, had proved so recreant and cowardly in the time of trial. Our Savior, then, may have intended this question as a reproof to Peter—to remind him how inconsistently he had acted with his high professions of devotion, and how little ground he had to vaunt himself of any superiority over his brethren.

3. But if the word "these" is taken in the *neuter gender*, as both the original and the English translation

will admit, it refers to *things* and not to persons. It might refer to the provisions they were eating; that is, "Lovest thou me more than meat and drink, and are you willing to sacrifice food and raiment that you may feed the flock of Christ?" Or it might refer to his secular employments, to which the apostle evidently was strongly attached; that is, "Lovest thou me—my service—more than these worldly avocations, and are willing to forsake them in order that you may feed the flock of God?" Or it may refer to worldly possessions—his boat, his fishing utensils, and the profits to be derived from them; that is, "Lovest thou me more than these worldly goods; are you willing to make the sacrifice of them all for my sake?"

4. It is highly probable that our Savior intended to blend both reproof and instruction; that he designed to reprove the former presumption of Peter, and to show him that he must be more courageous in the future—less apprehensive of personal danger—and that Christ must be loved with an all-absorbing, self-sacrificing affection.

In either view of the subject, how full of instruction is it to the child of God! Christ is saying to each one of us, "Lovest thou me more than these?" He, by whom thou hast been redeemed, requires the sacrifice of thy whole heart, that thou shalt be wholly his, that thou shalt hold every earthly object in subordination to the higher obligations of duty to him and to his cause.

The grand principle here presented, and which we propose to elaborate and apply on this occasion,



is embodied in the following proposition: LOVE TO CHRIST SHOULD BE THE SUPREME AFFECTION OF THE SOUL.

God has made the human heart to be the center of strong affections. They are designed for wise and beneficent ends; they are intimately connected with our personal happiness, and prompt to much of the useful and beneficent action of our lives.

These affections are widely distinct from the instinct of the brute creation, and also from the lower passions and propensities of our own nature. They are connected with our moral and spiritual being, and have, therefore, to do with us both as mortals and immortals. They sustain to each other mutual relations of control or dependence, of authority or subservience, of strength or weakness. And it is in this view that we affirm that our love for Christ should be supreme in control, in authority, and in strength.

These affections, classified according to their objects, are humanity, or love of the race; patriotism, or love of country; love of friends, or the social affections; love of family, or the domestic affections; and piety, or love to God. And among them we observe the prevalence of a great law; namely, that as the objects diminish in number, the affection properly increases both in authority and intensity. We have a natural and instinctive love of our race; we love all mankind, but our countrymen stand in closer relation and sympathy than those without. We love our friends still more; our family we love more than our friends; and our God—if our hearts be right—we love more than all.

There is much to admire, and much that should enkindle our gratitude to the great Creator, in all these affections. *The love of our race*, or the sentiment of humanity, seems to be a practical recognition of that great truth that God "hath made of one blood all nations of men that dwell on all the face of the earth." Acts xvii, 26. It recognizes a universal brotherhood. In its wide and warm embrace it regards every human being as a brother, endowed with the same faculties as himself, allied to the same God, and born to the same destiny. Hence, the sympathy that is felt for man in the distant parts of the earth. It matters little whether he be Christian or pagan, white or black. Is he in suffering? we sigh over his sorrows; is he in want? we hasten to his supply; is he smitten down with pestilence and death? we exclaim, as we drop the tear of sympathy, "Alas, my brother!"

Our country and our countrymen stand to us in closer relations and are knit to us by additional ties than those which bind us to the rest of the world and to our race. What wonder, then, if we love our country more than other lands, and our countrymen more than aliens and foreigners! We love our country not because of smiling fields and craggy hills, not because of brighter suns or milder climes, but because "it is our own dear, native land." It is the country of our birth, hallowed by the recollection of our ancestors, by the tender associations of childhood, of parents and home. This love has excited admiration in all ages of the world. It matters little where the scene of its devotion may be—

among the mountain-passes of ancient Greece, in the glens and highlands of Scotland, or amid the wilds of our own fair America. The world will do homage to its moral grandeur; orators and poets will celebrate its moral worth and beauty forever. On the other hand, the man who is destitute of this ennobling affection is held in deep and lasting abhorrence.

“Breathes there a man with soul so dead,  
Who never to himself hath said,  
This is my own, my native land!  
Whose heart hath ne’er within him burned,  
As home his footsteps he hath turned  
From wandering on a foreign strand?  
If such there breathe, go, mark him well;  
For him no minstrel raptures swell;  
High though his titles, proud his name,  
Boundless his wealth as wish can claim;  
Despite those titles, power, and pelf,  
The wretch concentered all in self,  
Living, shall forfeit fair renown,  
And, doubly dying, shall go down  
To the vile dust from whence he sprung,  
Unwept, unhonored, and unsung!”

Next to love of country, come the social affections; they spring up in the intercourse of life, and sweeten its toils and cares. Much has been said and sung about the fickleness of friends and friendships, and many have sighed for that better land where there are

“No friends that change, no love that cools.”

But yet the world has always done homage to the sacred name of friendship. At its shrine the purest homage of the heart has been offered; and no darker

epitaph could be inscribed upon the monument of any man than that "he lived and died without a friend." Scattered along the world's history are noble monuments of its strength and beauty. Actuated by its spirit, we hear David taking up the lamentation, "How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! O Jonathan, thou wast slain in the midst of thy high places. I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan; very pleasant hast thou been unto me; thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women. How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war are perished!"

So the affecting manifestation of friendship and integrity between Damon and Pythias penetrated the gnarled and rugged heart of even the tyrant of Syracuse, and extorted from him the exclamation, "Incomparable men—live, live; and teach me by your example and precepts how to become worthy of a participation in so sacred a friendship."

But still more beautiful, and strong, and glorious are those affections that subsist in the domestic circle. How strong and yet how tender the bond that binds together brothers and sisters—children of the same parents—brought up around the same domestic hearth, sharing in common joys and sorrows! How beautiful, how strong, and how enduring the love of the child to his parents! How often, after years have rolled away, and the cares and turmoils of life have wearied and distracted us, do we look back upon the scenes of early life, when the sun of a mother's love shone upon us, and gladdened our hearts and lives! That mother has perhaps been long the

tenant of the grave ; years have passed, and we have seen her not ; afflictions and sorrows have rolled over us, and we have not heard her soothing voice ; but still we love her. Her sweet memory is written upon the tablet of the soul ; and neither time, nor place, nor change can uproot that affection from the heart. Every remaining memorial of the dear, departed parent awakens a deep gush of emotion within us. What an illustration of this have we in those almost incomparable lines of Cowper, indited on the unexpected reception of his mother's portrait, many years after her death ! Gazing upon that portrait in all the fullness of deep and sublime emotion, he exclaimed :

“ O that those lips had language ! Life has passed  
 With me but roughly since I saw thee last.  
 Those lips are thine—thy own sweet smile I see—  
 The same that oft in childhood solaced me ;  
 Voice only fails, else how distinct they say—  
 ‘ Grieve not, my child, chase all thy fears away.’  
 Faithful remembrancer of one so dear,  
 O welcome guest, though unexpected here !  
 Who bidst me honor with an artless song,  
 Affectionate, a mother lost so long.

My mother ! when I learned that thou wast dead,  
 Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed ?  
 Hovered thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,  
 Wretched e'en then, life's journey just begun ?  
 Perhaps thou gavest me, though unfelt, a kiss ;  
 Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss—  
 Ah, that maternal smile ! it answers yes.  
 I heard the bell tolled on thy burial day,  
 I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away,  
 And turning from my nursery window, drew  
 A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu !

Where thou art gone,  
 Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown ;

May I but meet thee on that peaceful shore,  
The parting word shall pass my lips no more !  
Thy maidens, grieved themselves at my concern,  
Oft gave me promise of thy quick return.  
What ardently I wished, I long believed,  
And disappointed still, was still deceived,  
By expectation every day beguiled,  
Dupe of *to-morrow* even from a child.  
Thus many a sad to-morrow came and went,  
Till, all my stock of infant sorrow spent,  
I learned at last submission to my lot,  
But though I less deplored thee, ne'er forgot.  
Yet, O the thought, that thou art safe, and he,  
That thought is joy, arrive what may to me.  
My boast is not that I deduce my birth  
From loins enthroned, and rulers of the earth ;  
But higher far my proud pretensions rise,  
The son of parents passed into the skies."

How pure, how strong, and how sublime the gush of affection that could find expression in lines of such deep pathos and such exquisite tenderness ! And yet these are sensibilities that dwell in ten thousand hearts where the sacred name of parent, of mother, has been enshrined. It is right that these holy affections should exist ; right that they should be beautiful, and pure, and strong. The relation we sustain to those parents, their affection for us, and their unceasing benedictions upon our heads, would render us less than human did we fail to cherish these sentiments of filial piety toward them. But why should we forget that there is One toward whom we sustain a still nearer and holier relation—One whose care has surpassed even that of an earthly parent—and One who has loved us with an affection more deep, and sublime, and unfailing than even a mother's love ?

The Christian's love to God! I seem to tread on holy ground—ground enshrined in the heart's holiest sanctuary—ground that has been bedewed with the blood of martyrs. "Many waters can not quench love; neither can the floods drown it." Persecutions have rolled up their dark waters around this hallowed spot, but they could not extinguish the fires of divine love in the soul. Love is stronger than death; it binds the soul in the bonds of eternal union to the throne of the eternal God.

Let us, then, notice some of the distinct considerations going to show that no other affection in the soul should be so deep and absorbing as that of *love to Christ*.

1. If the ground of affection be excellency of character in its object—and who will doubt the obligation to love that which is excellent?—then should that being who combines the highest excellencies of character in himself be possessed of our warmest admiration and love. Who, then, comes up before us, combining all beauty and all excellency in his character? Among men, individuals are seen possessing isolated virtues, but they are too often offset by glaring defects that depreciate their general excellence of character. One has integrity, but it is associated with repulsive sternness, and we can not love him. One has the amiable virtues—he is generous, loving, sympathetic, confiding; but his character lacks manly robustness—he is wanting in wisdom and prudence, and our want of respect spoils our love. One has keenness of intellect, comprehension of thought, brilliancy of imagination; but *he is all intellect and*

*no heart*—an atmosphere chilling as a polar night surrounds him and repels our love.

Thus do we find every-where, in human character, some defect to mar its beauty and to detract from its loveliness. Isolated virtues shine forth, it is true ; but never do they all appear combined in the same individual. Were we once to find this combination, this blending of every excellence, like the rays of focal light, into one character—intellect and affection, dignity and simplicity, sympathy and justice, humility and firmness, timid gentleness and heroic daring in the cause of truth—such a character, were it before us, ought to command the homage of all men ; and we should verily feel that he who did not hold in deepest reverence the person possessing it, was warring against every principle of good in his own nature. But, my brethren, have we not such a character before us ? Look upon Him who was the impersonation of God in the flesh. Look upon Him who, in the text, challenges our supreme affection ! What harmony—what beauty of character ; what a concentration of every excellence ! Here are combined majesty and affability ; wisdom the most profound and sincerity the most artless ; here is heroic daring combined with the gentleness of the child ; a zeal untiring and all-consuming—combined with a self-possession and a discretion that no art could foil or betray ; here are combined “sublime sanctity and tender sympathy ; piety that rose to the loftiest devotion, and benevolence that could stoop to the meanest sufferer.” Here is a nature all alive with tenderness and sympathy, and yet impenetrated



with the strictest sense of unbending justice ; a compassion that comprehends in its wide range the extremest want and woe of our race, and a sense of justice immutable as the eternal principles of rectitude and truth. Such are some of the rays of excellence that combine in the character of Him who demands our love.

In the most excellent and the most illustrious of our race, if we attempt to gauge their character, we can always come to some point beyond which their excellence does not reach. Not so with the character of Christ ; not only is no virtue wanting, but each exists in full perfection. We may follow out the great mystery of godliness—God manifested in the flesh—till we ascend where angels vainly strive to solve it ; and yet the character of Christ shall still be beaming upon us with increasing luster, and gathering new and more transcending beauties forever. Hold up this character before you, let the impress of its beauty be made upon your soul, and then say whether Jesus is not entitled to the supreme affection of the heart ; whether he may not challenge each one of us with the question, “ Lovest thou me more than these ? ”

2. If the ground of our love be intimacy of relation, with whom do we sustain the nearest and most tender of all relations ? Friends, kindred, parents sustain near and holy relations, and to them we give our love. But is there not one who excels them all in this respect ? One without whom there is no life ? One whose “ eyes did see our substance, yet being imperfect ; and in whose book all our members

were written, when as yet there were none of them?" Psalm cxxxix, 16. Is there not one in whom we live, and move, and have our being? Can any relation be so intimate, so affecting, and so solemn as that which connects the immortal soul with its God? Whence, by whom, hath this taper of intelligence been lighted? Who is it that gives vitality and power to its mysterious and hidden nature? From what exhaustless well-fount do these hidden springs of action rise, and by what are they sustained? And, then, to know that not we alone, but that all our race sustain this common relationship to God, assures us that no claim upon our love can be so high or so imperious as his. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart."

3. But do we base our love upon what has been done for us? Is it a return for benefactions received? Then they who have promoted our good, who have succored us when in distress, who have delivered us in the hour of danger, heightened the joy of life, relieved the wants of our physical nature, nurtured and expanded the intellect, thrown a charm of beauty and happiness over our lives, and, above all, they who have pointed our hope to the height of heaven above—all they may claim our love.

The great benefactors of our race—they who have improved the condition of man by discoveries in science, by improvements in agriculture, in commerce, and by inventions in the arts—they who have resolved the great problems of humanity and given life and power to the sympathy that is felt among men—they who have periled life in the cause of

freedom, and thus laid the foundation of a nation's greatness and glory—all these are held in warm and undying affection. But is there not one who has done more than *all* this for us? Who is it that has arched the blue skies above us; who laid the foundations of the earth beneath us; who has adjusted every blade of grass and every flower of the field; every drop in brook or in ocean; every motion in earth or air; who has blended with such precision and harmony all the elements of nature; by *whom* and for *what* has all this been done? Is not the whole a lesson of God's care for us? The builder of all things is God. If we love those who do for us a little, still more should we love Him who has done so much. If we love them whose favors crown with joy and gladness a brief hour, how much more should we love Him who crowns not only our life, but our whole eternity with his goodness!

4. But again: is our love founded upon affection manifested to us? then should our love be proportioned to the love received. In this view I wonder not at the warm, undying attachment of friends; I wonder not at the love so often sacredly cherished for parents, for strong and holy was their love for us. But what love like that of Heaven has ever shone upon us? Earthly parents have so commended their love toward us that with unceasing care they watched over our infancy and childhood, bore with our waywardness and folly, and ever yearned to bestow benedictions upon us. But all this, with a thousand-fold increase of tenderness and constancy, has been done for us by our Father who is in

heaven. And then, to crown the whole, he has so commended his love toward us, that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

When before was ever such manifestation of love? How comprehensive, how rich! Not only redemption, but adoption and heaven! "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the children of God!" The apostle attempts not to describe this love. He says "behold" it. Ye sons of God, "behold" it, and let your bounding hearts thrill with holy joy and adoring love! Behold it, ye angels around the throne, and let your anthems louder ring when, rising before you in all its grandeur, you behold that amazing love which exalts mortal man to your companionship in the skies! Amazing, heavenly love! no wonder it excites the admiration of angels; no wonder that this has become the perpetual song of the redeemed in heaven: "Unto him that loved us, and washed us in his own blood, and made us kings and priests unto God and the Lamb, be majesty and dominion forever and ever." Measured by this standard, too, should our love to Christ be supreme.

"To rescue me from woe,  
Thou didst with all things part,  
Didst lead a suffering life below  
To gain my worthless heart.

My worthless heart to gain,  
The God of all that breathe  
Was found in fashion as a man,  
And died a cursed death.

And can I yet delay  
My little all to give?

To tear my soul from earth away  
For Jesus to receive?

Nay, but I yield, I yield!  
I can hold out no more;  
I sink, by dying love compelled,  
And own thee conqueror!"

5. But shall we take the Divine requirement as the standard of our love? Then listen to the voice of Christ Jesus as he says to each one of us, "Lovest thou me more than these?" It matters not what "these" may comprehend—riches, honors, pleasures, parents, children, self—all these must be held in subservience to Him who says, "Son, give me thy heart." For "thou shalt love the Lord thy God with *all thy heart*." For, again, "he that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me." The language of holy affection, gushing up from the heart in response, should be, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee."

"Thee will I love, my joy, my crown;  
Thee will I love, my Lord, my God;  
Thee will I love beneath thy frown  
Or smile, thy scepter or thy rod.  
What though my flesh and heart decay,  
Thee shall I love in endless day!"

Let me invite this congregation, then—let me invite all who love our Lord Jesus Christ—to rise to the sublime altitude in moral virtue and purity, of loving God our Heavenly Father with the supreme affection of the soul. To this end is the great mystery of the Gospel preached—not so much that

the intellect may be unfolded, as that the heart may be drawn upward and onward to heaven.

We now close our discussion of this subject with a few PRACTICAL REMARKS.

1. And, first, let me say that love to God is not of natural, but of spiritual and heavenly origin. We do not mean to say but what the unrenewed individual may feel a degree of complacency in contemplating the works and attributes of the Savior; we say not but what there may be a glow of emotion at the remembrance of his disinterested love, his unbounded benevolence, and his unexampled heroism and fortitude; we say not but what there may be some esteem for his goodness even; but all this may exist while yet the real beauty of the character of Christ is unperceived—nay, it may exist, while yet the heart is full of enmity to the Cross. Surround the blind man with all the beauties of nature and of art—he may feel something of their power as it is let in by the other senses—he may kindle at your description; but you must give him sight, you must open his eyes, before he can comprehend and receive the full impress of that beauty.

So stands poor human nature—blind, amid those sublime manifestations that mirror forth in uncreated beauty the ever-living God! Spiritual vision must be imparted—new life must quicken the soul. Hence “the love of God is shed abroad into our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us.” Would you love God? then, first of all, seek that love through the transforming power of his grace. This love may be cultivated and matured, but it comes not by

cultivation. God only can plant it in your heart. Go to him, then ; deplore your guiltiness and folly in withholding love from him who deserves all your heart ; there wait till around you and within you shall be poured the fullness of that love that unites the soul in holy fellowship with the redeemed on earth and in heaven—and, above all, with your Redeemer, God. Even now God is waiting to pour this love upon thy heart ; to kill its enmity to the Cross ; to quicken and inspire thy laggard spirit, and to unite thee in holy alliance to himself.

2. Again, we remark that true harmony, symmetry of character is to be attained only by loving God with supreme affection. For a man to be destitute of any one of the affections that pertain to our race—whether it be humanity, or love of country, or friendship, or any other essential affection that pertains to our nature and condition—is a serious defect of character. We feel that the man lacks some essential element of noble manhood. Or if any one of these affections is weak, the harmony of his character is destroyed. But what shall we say of him who is destitute of the highest and holiest of all these affections—the crowning glory of the whole ? What shall we say of him who loves every one else but God ? who loves every one else more than God ? He fails in that which above all things is essential to his true manhood.

If our love to Christ be supreme—instead of depreciating and uprooting our other affections—it will tend to harmonize and beautify the whole, giving each its due proportion of strength, and beauty, and

power. The man who loves God with supreme affection will find his humanity deepened, his love of country resting on a firmer basis ; he will be a better friend, a better husband, or father, or brother. Nothing can so ennoble the intellect, and inspire the soul with large views, with broad sympathies, and with harmonious and glorious development as enthroning God, the creator and governor of all, first over the heart and all its sensibilities. Here, my brethren, let his perpetual dominion be established in our souls.

3. Again : the soul that loves God with supreme affection has a grand central point of rest. In every trial and affliction, such a soul turns confidently and with relying faith to God. Its principles, desires, and hopes are all fixed. Such was the man who, when blessed with worldly riches, exclaimed that he enjoyed God in all things ; and afterward, when worldly riches were all taken away, that now he enjoyed all things in God. Happy are you, my brethren, if you can thus enjoy God—and thus feel that your soul, your life is rooted and grounded in him ! The earth may fly from its orbit, and chaos overwhelm the created universe ; but your foundation standeth sure—God himself is your portion, and the citadel of your defense.

4. In the fourth place, we remark that loving God with supreme affection will develop the active virtues of the soul. No man who loves God will fail to love his brother also ; nor will his love be that which says to the naked and the hungry, “be ye clothed and fed,” while neither clothes nor food are given. It will not be that which bids God-speed to the



missionary and the Bible, while it ministers to the success of neither. No, my brethren, if we have the love of God in our hearts, it will be like God's love to us—not a mere complacent feeling that costs us nothing and calls forth no sacrifice, but an active, beneficent, godlike love. Nay, brethren, how can you be Christians if you are not like Christ? And how can you be like Christ without doing as Christ did—filling up the whole measure of your earthly being with doing good? O that the whole Church might be brought to comprehend the high standard of her duty in this respect! Nothing could then withstand her power; she would go forth to universal conquest; and the reign of Christ speedily be ushered in over all the earth.

5. Again: loving God with supreme affection will exert a transforming influence upon the soul. There is an assimilating power in love. We are changed into the same image. If we love the world, then shall we be of the earth, earthy. But would we desire to rise above the world? is heavenly-mindedness a theme that has attractions for the soul? then love God, love him supremely, love him with thy whole heart; then shalt thou experience the blessed power of that love in the transformation of thy whole nature. The very countenance of Moses, when he came down from the mount of God, beamed with the Divine glory; and so often has the very countenance of the child of God—when God has come to him, communed with him, and filled him with himself—so often does his very face, like a mirror, image forth an indwelling God. And if the

love of God can set so glorious a seal even upon this poor mortality—the perishing casket of the soul—how much more glorious the seal set upon the soul itself! It is filled with God; it becomes like God. Would you be like God, my brother? then love him, love him with all thy heart.

6. Now, Christian brethren, let me inquire of each one of you, as our Savior did of his disciples, “Lovest thou me more than these?” We care not what is embraced in that comprehensive word “these,” whether riches and honor, whether esteem among men or the desire of fame in the ages yet to come; whether kindred, or family, or even *self*—dost thou love Christ more than all? Christian, dost thou? Hast thou less regard for honor, or fame, or riches than for thy Savior, and does thy life attest this fact? Is the Savior dearer to thee than friends, or family, or even *self*? and does thy heart say, “We count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, that we may know his love, and experience the power of his resurrection?” Then happy are you, and happy are they who witness in you the power of this love. But if you have it not, why—why do you wear the name of Christ? why profess to be his followers, and yet so sadly mistake the first elements of Christian duty? why are you so sadly deficient in the sublimest trait of Christian character? Ask thyself—why? Examine thy heart, study its motives, collate its history, be true to thyself, thy God, and soon shall thy soul gird on its strength and plume its pinion for the skies.

7. But can it be possible that there is one soul

before me who has had held up before him, all his life long, so divine a character for his admiration, and love, and imitation, but who has felt no drawings of soul toward it, and no kindlings of love for it? no desire to imitate the Divine model? You never think of looking upon a beautiful painting, a beautiful landscape, or even a noble specimen of a man, without admiration and love. How then is it that you love not the Lord Jesus Christ? And if you love not Christ, if you are not like him—have no congenial sympathies with his person and character—how can you hope to dwell with him in his kingdom? I pray God to help you wisely, devoutly, penitently to reflect upon this great truth. And may we all be brought to love and adore, with our whole and undivided hearts, Him who is the model of all excellence and the source of all pure and ennobling love!

## VI.

## INSUFFICIENCY OF MORAL VIRTUE.

*"What lack I yet?"* Matthew xix, 20.

THIS text stands in connection with one of the most deeply-interesting and instructive incidents in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ.

He was now returning from Galilee and journeying toward Jerusalem. His fame had been widely spread. His exalted purity of character ; the dignity of his person ; the majesty and power of his preaching ; and, above all, the mighty works he had wrought, had attracted toward him the attention of the whole Jewish nation. A great multitude followed in his train—some, that they might cavil at his words, and endeavor to embroil him in difficulties with the existing government ; others, that they or their friends might be healed of bodily infirmities. But not a few in that great multitude, we may humbly trust, were following the Savior that they might be instructed by the words of wisdom and of truth that fell from his lips.

While he was in the vicinity of Jericho, there came to him one who, in many respects, differed from the great multitude that thronged around him. He was a young man, of unblemished moral character ;

gifted in talent ; high in social position ; rich in worldly possessions ; and though yet young, he was a ruler among the Jews—probably a member of the Sanhedrim, the highest and most honorable council of his people. His sincerity and earnestness were manifested by the manner in which he came and made his address—for he came running ; he regarded not the presence of the multitude ; he affected not the dignity of the ruler, but fell upon his knees and cried out, “ Master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life ? ”

The Savior directed him, if he would enter into life, to keep the commandments—thus throwing him back upon the law, in which as a Jew he professed to trust for salvation, and which required implicit obedience in all its parts. The young man, unwilling that any thing should be left indefinite in a matter of such transcending importance, desired the Savior to be more explicit, and to point out the specific requirements of the law, which it was the more important he should observe, and he inquires, “ which ? ” In reply, the Savior directed him to those specific requirements, which, when observed in their spirit as well as letter, illustrate, in a peculiar manner, the workings of Divine grace in the heart. These, the young man declared, he had observed from his youth up. He had not been inattentive to the claims of the religion of his fathers ; to its ceremonial observances he had strictly conformed ; and even its moral duties had never been lightly regarded by him. Yet there was within him a consciousness that he was still destitute of the element of eternal life. His

conscience was troubled, and would not rest. He could not look up to heaven and feel that God was his reconciled Father; and, with deep earnestness, he inquires, "What lack I yet?"

It is said that Jesus beholding the young man, loved him. But he did not fail to discover the snare of Satan into which he had fallen. He was a mere moralist, and rested in the "outward law." Even now he only inquired, "What good thing shall *I* do?" Clothed in self-righteousness, and professing to worship and serve the living God, his great riches had taken possession of his heart and become the idol of his worship. Extreme cases, it is said, require extreme remedies. Hence our Savior said to him, "Go—sell all that thou hast;" give up your present trust; throw away your self-righteousness, for it can do no good; and as thy great riches—for we incline to think our Savior intended that the young man should make a literal sacrifice of his worldly possessions—as thy great riches have taken possession of thy heart, have estranged thee from thy God, make the sacrifice of them also, and then shalt thou be crowned truly with "eternal life."

O, had that young man, so influential in position and so rich in capabilities of doing good, but heeded the Savior's words, and obeyed the divine command, how different might have been his subsequent career! He might have been thrust out as a herald of the Cross. He might perhaps rivaled even the great Apostle to the Gentiles, in the abundance of his labors, in the power of his eloquence, and in the glory of his reward. But, alas, the sacrifice was too

great. He was wedded to the world, and unwilling to give it up. Not all the riches of eternal life could induce him to relinquish his earthly possessions ; and he did as thousands have since done and are still doing, "went away sorrowful." We have no account of his ever returning to Christ. Over his subsequent history there hangs a dark cloud, impenetrable as the grave itself. And there is too much reason to fear that thenceforward it was only a practical solving of that fearful problem of the soul, "What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

This text, taken in connection with the whole transaction, and especially in connection with the character of this young man, suggests an important practical truth for our consideration. The discussion and application of that truth will occupy us in the present discourse. And, perhaps, we can not present it more distinctly than by embodying it in the form of a proposition: NO DEGREE OF MORAL VIRTUE, INDEPENDENT OF FAITH IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, IS SUFFICIENT TO SALVATION.

You can not fail to see how this great truth lies upon the surface of this whole transaction. The outward morality of this young man was unimpeached. Even he who knew what was in man does not charge him with duplicity, with forgetfulness, nor even with self-deception. We are at liberty, therefore, to infer that he was precisely what he represented himself to be—a moralist, scrupulously observing the outward claims of religion. But, after all, within him was the consciousness that he yet lacked the essential element

of eternal life. The Savior also recognizes this lack; else why does he bid him go and sell all that he has?

But this is not an isolated fact. It embodies a broad and suggestive truth—one that is interwoven with the whole Gospel system. It is, therefore, of universal application. It has to do with us all. The hope of the mere moralist it would level with the dust, and bring him a penitent, conscience-smitten sinner to the foot of the cross of Christ. It would extort from him the deep penitential confession—

“This all my hope and all my plea,  
For me the Savior died.”

Happy he whose faith can realize how all-availing is that plea!

We proceed, then, to argue the truth of this proposition on several distinct grounds.

I. First, we argue it from the nature of the relations of man as a transgressor of law and a corrupt sinner to God.

Even granting that moral virtue might meet the obligations and be adapted to the conditions of an unfallen and sinless race, it can never meet the necessities of a race that has sinned and is already under condemnation. Practiced in its utmost perfection, without one moment's lapse and without one single failure, it can only fulfill the obligations of a sinless being and preserve a purity that has never been lost. But if it may thus preserve from falling, it has no power to redeem the fallen. It is *preventive*, and not *redemptive*. Even the purest and the holiest created being in the universe owes to God



the consecration of all his powers, and that, too, without intermission. For one moment's lapse, then, it is not in the power of a finite being to atone. Does he recover, consecrate himself anew? still he only performs *present* duty, meets present obligation. Before he can atone for the past he must go beyond present duty—do as much more than his present obligations require as he had fallen short in his lapse; but this in the very nature of things is not within the ~~p~~power of any created being, not even of an archangel in heaven.

Not only is there a long and dark catalogue of transgressions recorded against the sinner, but his moral nature is so defiled that he is no longer fit for heaven, could not enjoy it—nay, could not endure its purity. And then, also, to render his return more difficult, more impossible, if that can be, all his spiritual powers are enfeebled and perverted. Who, then, shall reach back and cancel that long and dark catalogue? who shall cleanse away that defilement? who shall restore the soul's lost spiritual vigor? What such a soul needs is not preservation from evils that are possible, but deliverance from those that are real.

Were some deadly contagion spreading over the land, cutting down the weak and the strong, multiplying its victims regardless of age, sex, or condition, and filling the land with desolation and woe, he who had not contracted the disease nor been exposed to the contagion, might feel secure in keeping away from the infected district. But what would it avail, even if it were possible, to take up the man

who had already contracted the disease and attempt to remove him? Prevention in his case would come too late. He must now have the medicine of healing; this only can save him from death. So with the sinner. His whole nature is diseased; "the whole head is sick and the whole heart faint." Preventives would come too late. They can do us no good. The soul is already diseased and needs healing. Hence the Gospel comes to us as a remedy, a healing power. It points to the balm in Gilead, and to the great Physician there, and then inquires, "Why is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?"

There, awakened sinner, is thy soul's healing to be found, there the Physician that knows all thy case, and there the medicine that can cure all thy wounds. When the disease is already contracted, when it is consuming all thy strength, destroying all thy life, wilt thou still delude thyself with hopes that are without foundation and lighter than vanity? Rather come to the great Physician, seek the healing of his mercy, and soon shalt thou cry out, exultant with holy joy, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name; who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases."

Thus, by the very considerations of man's relations as a fallen and sinful being to his God, are we brought to the conviction that *no degree of moral virtue, independent of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, is sufficient to salvation.*

II. In the second place, we argue the truth of

this proposition from the nature of moral virtue in itself considered.

There are two radical errors to which men are constantly liable in their estimate of moral virtue.

The first is philosophical. It places the moral quality of our actions exclusively in the *motives* with which they are performed. Such persons forget that the motives which actuate us receive much of their power from the *moral character* we possess. The same external temptations to dishonesty may exist with regard to two individuals; one will be unmoved, the other readily yield to crime. The seductions of the dram-shop are powerless upon the man of sobriety, while over the victim of intemperance they sway an omnipotent control. Our Savior said to his disciples, "Yea, the time cometh that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." Thus do we find that we must go *behind* the mere motive, and must take the motive in connection with the moral character of the individual. Who shall impeach the motive—"God service?" and yet it may be that of the persecutor, all stained with blood! The pagan mother who throws her child into the Ganges is not without natural affection, yet to her darkened soul there is "God service" in the act, and the most exalted felicities are to crown both mother and child as its reward.

The other mistake is practical and moral, and is specially connected with our subject. That which men call moral virtue is, for the most part, an external manifestation, and not an internal principle. The apostle sufficiently disposes of this, when he declares

that though we speak with the tongues of men and of angels, though we give all our goods to feed the poor, and though we give our bodies to be burned at the stake in defense of the truth, and yet have not the *internal principle* of the religious life, we are, after all, "as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." This is that outward righteousness which our Savior likens "unto whited sepulchers, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness."

The conclusion, then, to which we are brought, is, that in the sight of Heaven there is, there can be no such thing as genuine and acceptable moral virtue independent of a right state of the heart. Moral virtue, in its intrinsic element, exists only in connection with a *pure moral nature*. And how is our nature to be renewed and purified save through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? It behooves us, then, to pray with the Psalmist, "Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts. Create in me a clean heart, O my God ; and renew a right spirit within me. Then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression."

III. In the third place, we argue the truth of this proposition, from the condition upon which salvation is offered in the Gospel.

The condition of justification or pardon is set forth with such explicitness, and is reiterated with so many forms, and enforced with such cogency of argument and impressiveness of appeal, that none certainly need fail to comprehend how a sinner may obtain eternal life. The evangelist, speaking of the

end of Christ's mission, declares that to "as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that BELIEVE on his name." Christ is received. How? by faith—"believe on his name." What is the result? adoption—"become the sons of God."

Similar to this is the method of salvation given in the apostle's experience—"Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Here, Christ is the meritorious source of the blessing; faith the active agency, the divine sluice-way through which it flows down from Christ into the soul; and the blessing itself is justification from sin, bringing with it "peace with God"—that peace "which passeth all understanding."

To the same intent is the commission given by Christ to his apostles. Here we should naturally expect the great Master would be especially explicit. The gravity of the occasion, the magnitude of the results that were to flow, make it a point of transcendent interest in the Gospel history. Christ had now fulfilled his earthly mission, and was about to return back to his Father. His disciples would be left without his presence; and to them is to be committed the carrying forward of the great work for which he had come into the world. His last earthly act is to commission and send them forth. "Go ye, preach the Gospel; preach it to every creature." In commissioning them to this work, and especially as this commission was to be enlarged, extended, and perpetuated in their successors in the Gospel ministry, to the end of the world, we might naturally

expect that he would give, in an explicit and unmistakable form, the conditions upon which they might offer salvation "to every creature." This, indeed, is an essential part of the commission. Without it the message would be vague, indefinite, and powerless. Nor is this condition wanting. We find it bound up in the very commission, and interblended with it so as to make it an indispensable and unmistakable part of that commission forever. *He that believeth and receives the divine baptism shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.* Nothing can be more explicit than this enunciation of the conditions of salvation. It is simply *faith in Christ*. Faith is the key that unlocks and opens wide the door of divine mercy. The minister of the Gospel, armed with his divine commission, may go forth and proclaim to every soul on the face of the wide earth—*believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.*

What, then, becomes of moral virtue? Is it excluded—cast away? Nay, as a fruit of the Spirit, it is honored; for he that hath the faith and the hope of Christ in him, purifieth himself even as he is pure. But when we would solve the question *how a sinner may become just with his God?* neither heaven nor earth sends any other response, or gives any other way in which we may be saved, except by faith on the only-begotten Son of God.

IV Our fourth argument is drawn from the clear and explicit declarations of the Word of God.

A single declaration of St. Paul, if there was no other passage in the whole Bible bearing upon the question, would be sufficient to settle it. After

describing the lost condition of the race—both Jews and Gentiles—its depravity and corruptness, how utterly *all had gone out of the way*, and how even the Jew had rested himself in the circumcision of the flesh, he closes his discourse by the deeply-affecting and impressive conclusion—“Therefore, by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight.” Rom. iii, 20. The “law” referred to here is not simply the law given by Moses, whether moral or ceremonial. This is evident, from the fact that he is including both Jew and Gentile in his discourse, and also from the declaration that NO FLESH—that is, no human being in all the earth—should be justified by keeping the law here spoken of. It is a law, then, not restricted to the Jews, but extending to all the race. No one will claim that the Gentiles were under obligation to keep the ceremonial law of the Jews; and yet they were not without law, for they “are a law unto themselves; which show the work”—that is, the substance, the essence—“of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness.” A careful observation of the original text confirms this interpretation of the meaning of the apostle. The literal expression is, BY WORKS OF LAW—ἐξ ἔργων νόμου—*shall no flesh be justified in his sight*. It means *law* in its absolute sense. And the doctrine is that our race is so lapsed in sin, and every individual of the race is so involved that no one can be justified on the ground of his obedience to the law of God. What then? would the apostle destroy all hope? would he leave us in despair? Nay, “for what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the

flesh, God sending his own Son," hath accomplished in them that believe on his name. And thus he leaves us not in despair; he teaches us "that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ." He taketh away the former, that he may establish the latter, and that all we might have strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope presented us in the Gospel.

But the apostle is still more emphatic. As though he would sum up the whole argument and present the conclusion in such clear and explicit terms as would silence all cavil, and clear away all doubt, he declares that "without faith it is impossible to please God." Heb. ii, 6. These are strong words. The declaration is comprehensive, exhaustive. He that comes to another conclusion—that expects in some other way to unburden his guilty conscience and to please his God—must assume to understand the matter better than St. Paul, for he can not doubt as to what the apostle intended to assert. Sift this declaration. Bring home the matter—"without faith:" whatever else you may possess; whatever of gentleness of manner, sweetness of temper, integrity and honesty in business, or of outward blamelessness of life; not one, nor all of them can answer as a substitute for faith in the Redeemer. O, unrenewed, unbelieving man, remember the sentence hath gone forth—God hath given utterance to it; let it ring in thine ear, stir up thy dead conscience, dispel thy delusive hope—"without faith it is impossible to please God."



Does this seem a hard condition? Does it seem strange that God requires faith in thee as a condition of reconciliation and fellowship? strange that he will accept of nothing as a substitute in faith? that it must be faith, and faith only? Look at the matter. It is not an arbitrary requirement; it is founded in the very nature of things. Among men there can be no friendship—no union of hearts—nay, scarcely any harmony even in outward life—without faith each in the other. Officious and outward acts of kindness, where they are known to have no foundation in a genuine internal feeling, are distasteful and offensive. There is no process in the moral nature, except one of utter perversion and hypocrisy, by which you can receive the author of such acts, or such service to your heart. All your moral feelings revolt at the very idea; you spurn such a man from you. Can we wonder, then, that in the sight of God, from whom there can be no concealment of motive or of feeling, no man can be acceptable without faith? Or, indeed, can we wonder that before God—*whatsoever is not of faith is sin?* Gravitation is not more indispensable to the harmony of the physical world than faith is to that of the moral.

In all this, however, we do not underrate the value of moral virtue, nor displace it from its connection with the perfect Christian character. We simply affirm that without faith it is powerless to reconcile us to God and save the soul. But where faith exists, and justification by faith, there is the basis of a new creature and a *new life*. A sweet fountain does not send forth bitter water; nor will a pure

heart lead otherwise than to a pure life. Holy living is one of the genuine fruits of holy believing ; and he who does not aim at holy living, and that, too, with some good degree of success, has reason to distrust the soundness of his faith, and the genuineness of his Christianity.

Thus, by the most explicit declarations of the Word of God, are we taught that something above and beyond mere moral virtue is essential to the salvation of the soul. The hidden spring of salvation—hidden to all who do not believe—lies back of all this ; and we are thus taught the indispensableness of faith in Christ as our Redeemer. And he that is vitally allied to the Lord Jesus Christ can truly say of his own experience, as St. Paul said of his, “ Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

V We have examined this question in the light of reason, and also in the light of revelation. The teachings of both are explicit, and establish the proposition so clearly that no room is left for either doubt or cavil. We might, therefore, here rest the argument. But it will be profitable to view the question in its relation to human experience ; to endeavor to ascertain what there is, or whether there is any thing in our moral nature that responds to this theoretical and practical truth. We proceed, then, in the fifth place, to argue the truth of the proposition from the convictions and the confessions of moralists in all ages of the world.

I am aware how difficult it is for a man to be made to feel any high degree of culpability or guiltiness

because of the simple lack of faith. When in the ordinary duties of life he endeavors to meet his moral obligations, he says, "I am honest in all my business transactions ; my example in society is on the side of morals and virtue ; I am ever giving to the needy ; I seek to support the Church, and contribute to the benevolent enterprises of the day." Grant all this. What then ? Is it any thing more than you owe to society—to your fellow-men ? We would not undervalue the noble traits of character which underlie these manly and benevolent deeds. Humanity has need of them all, and the world may be benefited by them. But after all, remember that these traits, noble and praiseworthy as they may be, are essential to your very manhood, and without them you fail to fulfill the claims of earth, to say nothing of the claims of heaven. You are not a drunkard, you do not brutalize your manhood by intemperance, do not wallow in the filth of the gutter ; you are not a thief, a robber, a burglar ; you are not greedy of gain—a grasping miser whose sordid heart no longer knows any other affection than that which binds him to his earthly gains ! It is all well. We congratulate you that you have risen above these fell and destructive passions of the race. But how high does this bring you up ? Only, my friends, in the most favorable light in which it can be viewed—only up to the level of earth. Above this what a glorious ascent is possible for our spiritual and immortal nature !

Come, let us reason together. From the temporal let us advance to the spiritual ; from our acknowledged obligations to man let us reason to

those we owe to God. Here is one who owes a debt to his neighbor; he is able to pay, and yet he refuses; he conceals his property, defies the claims of justice, and defrauds the man. You say it is dishonest and mean, and words can hardly express your indignation. But pause, think, reflect. Is there not something due from *you* to your Heavenly Father? Do you not owe *Him* a debt? He comes presenting his claim. To-day he says to each one of you, "Son, give me thy heart." You can not deny the justice of the claim. All your life long have you owed this debt, and years ago it should have been paid. You condemn him who robs a fellow-man. What, then, shall we say of him who robs God? And yet may not the Almighty say to many of you, my friends, as he said to the Jews of old, "Ye have robbed God?" And if ye shall respond, as did they, "Wherein have we robbed thee?" he will say also to you, *In tithes and offerings—in that ye have offered the lame and the blind in sacrifice, and laid polluted bread upon mine altar!* Or it may be that he will say, *"In that ye have laid no sacrifice at all upon mine altar."*

You say, "I am as good as many professing Christians." But suppose these professing Christians by whose standard you measure yourselves, should be found wanting and fail of heaven, what, then, for yourselves? But, granting that your outward life is even better ordered and more exemplary than these poor specimens of the Christian, perhaps your advantages have been better than theirs, perhaps you have been favored with a higher order of

natural endowment ; or, when all these fail, are you sure you fully comprehend how often with humble repentings these weak and unstable souls come before God with sincere confessions and earnest purposes of amendment? But suppose the whole case stands just as you have put it, still I appeal to you that in the calm moments of reflection it does not satisfy the conscience or the heart, much less can it avail at the judgment day.

In spite of all his specious pleas, in spite of all his self-complacent boasts, the man whose sins are unforgiven, and whose heart is unrenewed, will still feel, especially under those solemn visitations of the Holy Spirit which strike through all the subtile and specious pleas of the self-complacent Pharisee and arouse the soul to a consciousness of its true state—will still feel the deep and painful conviction that after all he is destitute of the essential element of eternal life. The soul will become conscious of its lack, and no flattering unction laid upon it can blind it to the dread reality. No one under all these dread and solemn sanctions can stifle within him the consciousness that when weighed in the balance he will be found wanting.

Such was the condition of this young man when he came to Christ. We may concede largely to his excellence of moral character. Our Lord sets us the example in this respect. Nothing that he claimed of moral virtue was denied. Among the Pharisees he belonged to the straitest sect ; among moralists he stood up unimpeached by Christ himself ; among the scrupulous observers of the outward law

none were more scrupulous. Why, then, was his conscience troubled? why this trembling apprehension that his soul was still destitute of the element of eternal life? And why, too, those terrible words of the inexorable Lord, "*Go, sell all that thou hast?*" There is a terrible significance in all this. It is true soul-consciousness of an inward guilt which can be washed away by no outward act. It is a confession of the utter failure of moral virtue to redeem and save the soul. But was it not a mistaken disquietude? Could one so fair, so upright have occasion for such alarm, such dread of impending perdition? Might not the element of eternal life be, after all, somewhere wrapped up in the ample folds of that attractive garb of moral virtue? Hear the final and irreversible judgment of Heaven—"Go, sell all that thou hast." This decision is universal as it is irreversible. It dissipates forever the hope of the mere moralist. It says to him, "Christ is the door of entrance into life, and vain are all thy efforts to enter by any other way."

When Nicodemus, the ruler, came by night to the Savior seeking instruction in regard to his personal salvation, we can well imagine that he did not fail to make full statement of his case. I seem to hear him saying to Christ with cautious, well-considered words, "I have ever been careful to observe all the requirements of the law; from the altar I withhold no sacrifice; I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all I possess, and if wrongfully I take aught from any man I restore him fourfold." Thus spoke the ruler, and then, with a look expectant of

approval, he makes his appeal to the great Teacher. What is the reply? Does our Savior say, "Nicodemus, you have done well, there is no reason why your conscience should be disquieted; go, return to your home, do as you have done, and all will be well?" Is this the language, are these the instructions of our Lord to Nicodemus? No, my friends, nothing like it; the farthest from it possible. "Verily, verily I say unto you, ye must be born again." With one single utterance of his Lord and Lawgiver how are all his hopes swept away! So would we come to him who is now trusting in his moral virtue, his honesty, his benevolence, or any other form of mere human excellence; and in the language and by the authority of the great Teacher, we would say to him, "Ye must be born again."

The case of the young man has been reproduced times without number. A single instance may serve as an illustration of a very common experience. In a religious awakening a pastor invited a meeting of the young people of his congregation in the parsonage. The room was thronged with anxious inquirers. During the opening exercises he observed a young lady deeply affected, and, passing by others, came directly to her. To his great surprise, he recognized in the agonizing penitent one of the most estimable and exemplary young ladies of his congregation, one whose amenity of manner, whose practical benevolence, and whose purity of life might have been copied to advantage by many of the members of his Church. Calling her by name, he inquired, "What has brought *you* here?" "My sins, sir," was her

deep and earnest response. But, said he, wishing to test the depth and soundness of her conviction, "what have you done that you should feel so deeply?" "O, sir," said she, "I hate God, and I know it." Perhaps never before that hour in all her life had she comprehended how deep and fearful is the enmity of the carnal mind to God. "I hate God, and I know it; I have a heart opposed to all good, and I know, I feel it; I hate my own life, and now see how empty and worthless—nay, how insulting to God—have been all my good deeds, with which I thought to merit his favor! O, how utterly wretched and lost is my soul!" She arose and went into an adjoining room, where the wife of the pastor was in attendance upon a sick child. There she paced the floor to and fro, in an agony of soul bordering upon despair. "What mockery! what mockery!" she exclaimed; "how have I deceived and ruined my soul! My condemnation is just! But O, my God, where shall deliverance be found?" Just then she took hold of a copy of the hymn-book lying upon the stand, and, lifting it up, her eye lit upon that blessed stanza which has brought peace to many a despairing soul:

"There is a fountain filled with blood,  
 Drawn from Immanuel's veins,  
 And sinners plunged beneath that flood  
 Lose all their guilty stains."

In one moment, giving up every other trust, she was enabled, by faith, to plunge beneath that flood. Quicker than thought light broke in upon her soul; her conscious condemnation was uplifted; the Divine



Spirit filled her with his presence, and she burst forth into the exultant song—

“My God is reconciled;  
His pardoning voice I hear;  
He owns me for his child,  
I shall no longer fear.”

Blessed be God! “for what the law could not do in that it was weak,” God has accomplished by “sending his only Son in the likeness of sinful flesh.” *For the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has power to deliver the soul from all the bands of sin and death.*

How is it, my friend, with you at this hour? Does not your own heart respond to this truth? You claim moral excellence; that you are honest, upright—better than many members of the Church. Be it so; we will not dispute over that point. Look down into your own heart. Is all right *there*? Have you rendered to God that which is his due? paid back all that you owe him—all that he asks from you? Rather is there not a consciousness within you that something is lacking? You are not yet quite ready to go up to the bar of the Judge. The foundation on which you are now resting your hope may answer the expedient of the passing moment when in the midst of life, but in the moment of deep, honest, and earnest reflection you demand something more! For the dying hour, for the judgment day, the soul cries out for some other refuge—a refuge that will stand the storm. Thus are the convictions and confessions of moralists responsive to the great truth that “there is none other name under heaven

given among men whereby we must be saved," other than "the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth."

VI. We present as our sixth and last argument the convictions and confessions of Christians in all ages of the world. Whatever may be their attainments in holiness—though they breathe the very atmosphere of heaven while yet they dwell on earth—the testimony of their hearts and lips is that it is all of grace. The confession they make before men is one of utter helplessness as well as of utter unworthiness in themselves. Their language is, "Not I, not I, but the grace of God that dwelleth in me."

Among the servants of Jesus Christ that have adorned the Church in modern times, no two stand more preëminent for piety than the sainted John Fletcher of England and the eminent Dr. Payson of our own country. In many of their peculiar traits of religious character they were very similar. Take their biographies, study them, analyze the elements of their spiritual life, its exercises and manifestations. You will gather many a rich lesson to aid you in the Christian life. But you will find no element more predominant, none more constantly present, and none more deeply felt than that entire self-renunciation which marks all Christian life. And no other confession was so constantly upon their lips as that of their own guiltiness. To those unable to appreciate the sentiment, it seemed an almost morbid feeling. But its cause was very widely separated from that. They had an overmastering sense of the glory and the fullness of the Divine goodness. They delighted to ascribe all their hopes and joys to the

redeeming mercy of the Lamb. In fact, my brethren, there is little difference between the redeemed on earth and in heaven. Do the glorified saints, as they cast their golden crowns at the feet of the Redeemer, exclaim, "Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood?" The saints on earth take up the burden of the same song and cry aloud, "Thou art worthy, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood."

No man ever had more reason for boasting than St. Paul. A man of giant intellect, of the richest culture, and of the most brilliant prospects among his own people; but, forsaking all for Christ, he went out a homeless wanderer; he traversed vast regions of Asia and Europe, preaching Jesus and the resurrection, confounding the subtile philosopher and the bigoted Jew by the cogency of his arguments and the might of his eloquence, and in every place gathering seals to his ministry, founding churches, and confirming the saints of God. Neither imprisonments nor stripes, neither the wild beasts of Ephesus nor the dungeons of Philippi, neither the perils endured from false brethren nor the perils of shipwreck could move him from the fulfillment of the Divine mission he had received to testify of the grace of God to whole nations and people. May not thirty years of toil, suffering, and sacrifice such as this be remembered? May it not become the boast and the glorying of his old age? May it not cheer and delight him in his prisoner's cell? We need not speculate about the answer; the apostle has given it himself. O, what forgetfulness of self is here!

Labors and sacrifices are all forgotten. He would as soon trust his life to a bubble upon the ocean as his soul to any of these. One object of glorying only appears. It spans the whole heavens. It is luminous with the effulgence of the Godhead. It enraptures all his vision and absorbs all his soul. It is the wondrous Cross! Catching the inspiration of the same spirit, the true Christian can ever sing:

"In the Cross of Christ I glory,  
Towering o'er the wrecks of time;  
All the light of ancient story  
Gathers round its head sublime."

When Bishop Asbury, the great apostle of Methodism in this country, was drawing down to the grave, he rapidly reviewed his past labors and trials. "At the early age of thirteen," said he, "I experienced religion, and at sixteen became a traveling preacher; at twenty-six I left my country, my home and kindred, and became a wanderer in this strange land. In thirty years I have crossed the Alleghanies fifty-eight times, scaling the mountains and threading the pathless forests on horseback and alone. Times almost without number have I slept in the woods; I have forded rivers and swamps; have often been without food, and often destitute of comfortable raiment. These labors and privations, endured for the cause of my Master, have wasted my energies, and brought upon me the disease which is now carrying me down to the grave. But, after all, my mind is still the same." And then, gathering up his little remaining strength, he repeated, with intense energy,

*"Yes, my mind is still the same; I am a sinner saved by grace."*

When the associate pastor of the venerable Dr. M'Laren, of Edinburgh, came to the bedside of his dying colleague, he said to him, "What are you doing now, my brother?" "Doing?" said the dying man; "I will tell you. I am gathering together all my prayers, all my sermons, all my good deeds, and all my evil deeds; and I am going to throw them all overboard, and swim to glory on a single plank of Gospel grace."

Such, my friends, are the feelings and the confessions of Christians in all ages. Their highest virtue, their greatest sacrifice, and their grandest and most successful labors for the cause, all weigh lighter than a feather in the scale of salvation. The one, universal utterance of the Christian heart has been the same in all ages.

"Jesus, thy blood, thy blood alone,  
Hath power sufficient to atone."

And now, my friends, we have subjected the truth deduced from the text to the scrutiny of reason, to the test of the Scriptures, and also to that of human experience. Has the proposition been sustained? Does it seem to you to be reasonable, and Scriptural, and also in accordance with the better and sounder experience of men? Then there are important practical applications of the subject which demand our serious attention.

1. And first, we learn that the sinner may do much, and yet come short of obtaining "eternal life."

The young man, uttering the language of our text, had done much. He had come all the way from Jerusalem down to Jericho, that he might seek instruction from the wonderful Teacher. He came in open day; in the presence of a great multitude; he kneeled upon the very ground, confessed his sinfulness, and prayed to be taught! This was no small effort; not a little humbling to his pride! he, the ruler, the man of wide influence, of high social position, of great riches, to come thus, not amid the gorgeous worship of the Temple, but in the open fields; and not before the high-priest of his nation, but before Him who was *despised and rejected of men!* But, after all, even when the young man had gone so far, and done so much, he went away from Christ, and lost his soul.

So, my unconverted friends, you may do much, and yet fail of eternal life. You may come to the house of God, and reverently listen while the man of God proclaims the Word of eternal life; you may contribute of your substance to the support and the spread of the Gospel; nay, you may seriously and anxiously inquire the way of life; you may come to the altar and bow down in penitence before God, while holy men weep over and pray for you; and yet, after all, you may go away without Christ—go away to sink down into perdition forever. How the vision of the young man in the Gospel comes up before me! As the language of the Savior, *go, sell all that thou hast*, falls upon his ear, a look of surprise passes over his countenance. You can read the workings of his mind. First it is a doubt, whether the Lord really meant *that*; then a feeling of

irresolution—his love of the world is struggling in conflict with his desire of eternal life. You are in doubt which will triumph. Slowly he rises. With evident reluctance he retires. The eyes of the Savior follow him with an expression of unutterable sympathy and concern. An immortal soul is wavering in the balance. Once or twice he pauses and looks back. We almost think he will return. Ah, vain hope! Now with rapid strides he passes onward and away. He is gone. We shall see him no more. Yes, once again I shall behold that young man. Together we shall stand among the resurrected millions of the race, before the bar of the final Judge. O, the sentence! O, the condemnation! And then the worst of all is that he was once in the very presence of the divine Redeemer, and from his own lips had the offer of eternal life! Will not that young man remember forever that moment and that scene? O, it does appear to me that if in the cup of woe meted out to the lost sinner, there is one ingredient more bitter than another, it must be the remembrance of those precious opportunities once slighted and now gone forever. Ever from the profound and awful depths of the soul's perdition, the memory reaches away back to the moment when it stood upon the very threshold, with mercy's door wide open, and yet failed to enter, and thus failing was lost forever! How fearfully certain it is that no burning fire, nor gnawing worm, nor torment of devils can so pierce the agonizing soul as such a memory as this!

“I'll tell thee what is hell—thy memory—  
Recording

All that hath been, that ought *not* to have been,  
 That might have been so different, that now  
 Can not but be irrevocably past."

And suffering this *memory* of mercies once rejected, and now gone forever, the dread conviction shall come down upon thee that all this ruin is the work of thine own hand, and thou shalt cry out with triple anguish, "*I am tormented in this flame!*"

2. Again: our subject teaches us that the special hinderance in the way of him that would seek Christ must be removed. "Go and sell all that thou hast." It may be your pride; your ambition; your love of riches; your sinful pleasures. It matters not how great, nor yet how small the obstacle. It is the mountain hinderance across thy path. Thy faith must bid it depart, or it will keep thee back from Christ forever.

The weight of a feather will sometimes poise the scale laden with the richest treasures. The removal of what seemed to be the slightest hinderance has often been succeeded, as in a moment, with the most glorious results. It was but a small thing to touch the hem of the Savior's garment, and yet what a wondrous healing it wrought! We have a case in point. During a revival season, an aged gentleman became deeply concerned for the salvation of his soul. Evening after evening the altar was crowded, but he was not of the number. When invited, he firmly but respectfully declined. Scores had already found peace, but he, though often confessing his need of religion and his earnest seeking for it, was not among them. What is the hinderance? I have no answer



to this question, unless one is found in the sequel. During a meeting of peculiar power, he rose from his seat ; slowly and firmly, like a man who has a fixed purpose, he approached the altar, and bowed down before God. Scarcely had his knees touched the floor, when the blessing of salvation, in full measure and in mighty power, filled all his soul. The last obstacle had been taken out of the way. He had now become willing to receive the kingdom of God as a little child. And though there was no virtue in the wood of the altar, yet the simple act of approach marked the transit of a soul from death to life.

Probably, with every one of you, dear friends, who are out of Christ, there is some *one* hinderance, which, more than any thing else, lies in your way. What is that hinderance? Look back upon the religious awakenings of former years, when the Holy Spirit strove with you, when you trembled before God, when you *almost* determined to become a Christian. What then prevented you? From this distant point of observation you can survey it calmly, you can see it more clearly than you could even then. What was it? The same influences probably still bind you in sin. Their cords have become stronger ; your power of resistance weaker. Beware lest they prove your ruin. Beware lest by and by they become manacles of steel and bind you down in the prison-house of hell forever.

3. This subject also teaches us that nothing can answer as a substitute for faith in Christ. If you have integrity of character, amenity of manner, and all other graces and virtues belonging to humanity,

it is well. They are not without their use. They are a joy and an honor to their possessor. They receive honor among men. But they have no power to save the soul. This power comes by "the hearing of faith." "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even to them that believe on his name.*" If, then, you lack faith in Christ, it is an essential, a fatal lack! Heaven has no promise of life, and the Redeemer's blood no power to save the soul that is without faith in him. Faith is the shaft, directed heavenward, that can catch the lightnings of Divine justice, turn them aside from your guilty head, and conduct them harmless to the ground.

4. And this brings us, finally, to notice how our lack may be supplied. From the hour Christ gave to his disciples their commission to go forth and preach remission of sins, through faith in his name, has this Gospel been proclaimed to dying men. No matter how much we may lack, though it be every element of goodness; no matter how dark or hopeless our condition, faith calls down the omnipotence of God for our salvation.

"Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees,  
And looks to that alone;  
Laughs at impossibilities,  
And cries, it shall be done!"

Nor need we any delay. There is a present omnipotence in faith. Trembling, doubting soul, longing for deliverance from guilt, from darkness, from sin, saying in thine heart, "Who will show us any good?" behold, light has come. Thou hast only to

*believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.* Human virtues are vain. Pilgrimages are vain. Tears and groans can not save you. And all the sacrifices thou canst offer to God are worthless. But there is a sacrifice laid upon the altar for thy sins ; and when the smoke of that sacrifice, mingled with thy faith, goes up before God, there is no power on earth or in heaven that can stay the Divine blessing. Even at this moment, if thou wilt believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, quicker than the most rapid flight of human thought, shall the Holy Spirit come down to fill all thy heart and to bear its divine witness that thou art indeed a child of God. “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life ; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life ; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

Thanks be unto God who hath given unto us this great salvation, and sent forth this great light that all the ends of the earth may believe on the name of the only-begotten Son, and through believing may become the partakers of eternal life !

## VII.

## CONDITIONS OF DISCIPLESHIP.

*"Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross, and follow me."* Mark viii, 34.

THE disciples had not up to this hour fully comprehended the character and the mission of the Lord Jesus Christ. They had been with him nearly three years in daily and familiar intercourse; and no doubt they comprehended something of the purity of his character and the spirituality of his teaching. But somehow or other, along with the spiritual advantages they expected to derive from their connection with him, they had associated the establishment of an earthly government, in which they would fill the highest offices, and share the highest honors. When our Savior came, therefore, as he did in the context, to speak of being rejected of men, of being persecuted, of suffering and dying—a result so utterly crushing to all their worldly hopes and their worldly expectations—the disciples could not but think that this language, instead of being prophetic, was only the offspring of gloomy and despondent feelings, and, therefore, they sought to cheer their Lord. In language that savored of rebuke as well as of affection, they assured him that these things

could not be. With stern majesty our Savior turns upon them. He rebukes especially the presumptuous and forward Peter, charging him with being the instrument of Satan, with savoring the things that be of men rather than the things that be of God—that is, with being actuated by worldly and selfish motives, and then proceeds to show how this suffering and death are essential that the great end of his earthly advent may be realized, and the work of human redemption accomplished.

But he does not stop here. He lifts up the curtain that conceals their own future from their eyes, and in that future he unfolds to them, not ease, and honor, and wealth, and power, but toil, and sacrifice, and suffering, and death, as the portion in this life ; but in the world to come crowns, and dominions, and fadeless joy. Nor was this to be their heritage alone, but it was to be the heritage of the saints of God in all ages of the world. He that would wear the victor's crown must first endure hardness as a good soldier of the Lord Jesus Christ ; and the saints of God in all ages of the world, in the toils and trials by which they have been trained and nurtured for the skies, in their own deep, personal experience, have found that

“Through tribulation's stormy deep  
The way to glory is.”

I pause a moment here. Did ever worldly impostor endeavor to gather around him followers by presenting such motives as these?—so unselfish, so unworldly, so spiritual, so divine? Is it not the characteristic of the worldly impostor that he will

carefully conceal the sacrifices to be made, the obstacles to be encountered, while he holds up in entrancing imagery the personal, and selfish, and sensual advantages to be derived from association with him? Not so with Christ. He invites not to ease, but to toil; not to worldly pleasure, but to self-sacrifice. Thus the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ comes to us stamped in the very motives it addresses to men, with the divinity of its origin, showing that it is not of earth, but from heaven—not from men, but from God.

Having corrected the misapprehension of his disciples, our Savior proceeds to unfold the conditions of discipleship in his school. In doing this, he evidently had in mind the conditions of proselytism in the Jewish Church—that is, the conditions upon which an alien, a Gentile might be admitted to the immunities and privileges of God's chosen people. These conditions were four, substantially: First, the proselyte must come of his own free will; second, he must renounce every thing that connected him with his false religion; third, he must take upon himself the yoke of the Jewish law—that is, submit to its ordinances and requirements; and, lastly, he must solemnly pledge himself to continue in the new religion so long as he should live. You can not fail to see how our Savior in the text seizes upon these conditions of proselytism, and holds them up before us as the conditions of discipleship in his own school.

I. It must be a *voluntary act*. This is implied in the expression, "Whosoever will." The person who would enter the school of Christ must enter of his

own free will. God will preserve forever inviolate the freedom of the human will. It is recorded in all the facts of man's history, and attested in the very consciousness of his being, that he is not a machine—not a mere creature of internal impulse, or of external force ; but a being endowed with the high and holy prerogatives of moral agency. All our ideas of human responsibility find the roots of their being in the inalienable freedom of the human will. But for this man had never fallen ; but for this freedom of will, angels had never left their first estate. Thus, through all ranks and orders of beings, whether upon the earth beneath or in heaven above, God requires that the service and homage rendered unto him shall be free and voluntary. Christ will have no reluctant disciple in his school. God will have no reluctant angel in heaven.

This thought is enforced still further by the fact that man is invited as a free agent to come to Christ. All the provisions of the Gospel, all its promises, and all its invitations are based upon the idea that the freedom of the will is to be preserved inviolate. The invitation is sent out : “ Come, for all things are now ready ;” “ Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters ;” “ Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely ;” “ Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts ;” and in the language of our text, “ Whosoever will.” Man is approached as a being that may be reasoned with—a being that may feel the force of argument, the power of motive ; and yet final decision is left with himself. The sinner renounces his sins and comes to Christ,

not only as a free agent, but in the conscious exercise of his freedom. No overmastering power bears down the will ; no compulsory agency compels his adhesion to Christ ; but in the conscious dignity of his own immortal freedom, he renounces his sins, and consecrates himself to the blessed Redeemer. No matter what sinful indulgences he renounces, what sinful pleasures he gives up for Christ, what sacrifices or what toils he endures for the sake of the blessed Master, they are all crowned with the ennobling glory that it is the voluntary offering of a soul conscious of its immortal freedom.

And so, on the other hand, the sinner who rejects Christ is condemned as a free agent. The complaint of Heaven against the sinner is : " Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life ; " " This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light." It is not that there is no light ; it is not that the light is far off and inaccessible, but having the light, and being blessed with its sacred shining, the sinner deliberately closes his eyes, and chooses darkness, because his deeds are evil ; and the final condemnation that shall fall, like the echoes of eternity, upon the ear of the dying sinner, banishing him from the presence and the glory of God, will be, " Because I have called and ye have refused ; I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded ; I also will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh." And every soul in perdition is but a monument of the obstinacy and perverseness of the human will against the long-suffering mercy and forbearance of God.



No other worship or service than that which is free and voluntary, could be pleasing or acceptable in the sight of God. We will not say but what the Almighty, by his own invisible power, might take hold of the human will and bend it to his own purpose. But what is there then left? Take away this element of moral freedom, and what would remain? Nothing that can give high and ennobling moral character to the thoughts, the feelings, the words, or the actions. That which gives sublimity and purity to the devout exercises of the soul, engaged in the service of God, would be wanting. Take away the freedom of the will, and the devotion of the noblest and purest spirit would embody in it no higher element than the merest motion produced by mechanical force; no higher element than the fall of the rain-drops, the sighing of the wind, or the roar of the cataract. The labor of such an intellect would be devoid of all that elevates intellectual above mechanical action. There is no element of moral virtue remaining.

Let me, then, say to the impenitent, Wait not for some overmastering power or some fortunate accident which is to bring you to Christ. It must be a voluntary work. Sinner, wait not; God calls, invites, entreats. He sets before you motives of vast moment. He seeks by a thousand ministries to bring you to Christ. But beyond this even Infinite mercy may not go. Let it be settled in your mind at this hour, that if you ever come to Christ, if you ever enter the school of the great Teacher, if you are ever permitted to sit down at his feet and feel the throbbings of his great heart as it beats in

sympathy with your own, it must be a purpose and a work of your own. O, if I could rend away this delusive expectation of some fortunate accident, some peculiar circumstance, or some mighty power which is to waft you into the favor of God; and if I could, at this solemn hour, make you feel that the solution of this great question is to rest upon your unfettered manhood—that you and you alone are to decide it, and are to reap the consequences of that decision through the unending ages of the future, it appears to me that one great obstacle to your salvation would be taken out of the way. But O, if ever so unspeakably wretched as to be lost, as to go down to the dark abodes of everlasting woe, upon the door of your prison-house within and without should be written in letters of flaming fire: “He hated instruction, and did not choose the fear of the Lord.” May God save you from so fearful, so appalling a calamity!

II. The second condition of discipleship, as indicated by our Savior, is *self-renunciation*. It is expressed in these words: “And deny himself.”

It implies, first, a relinquishment on the part of the sinner of all trust in himself for salvation. This condition meets him at the very threshold. And perhaps there is not one of more difficult performance, or one more repugnant to the unrenewed heart. If gold could purchase religion, thousands would pay the price. If long and toilsome pilgrimages were enjoined, how cheerfully they would be undertaken! But to come as a condemned and wretched sinner—to *know* and *feel* his own vileness—to realize himself

to be without merit, without claim! to have the heart wrung with penitential agony, as he looks up to Christ and cries out,

“Other refuge have I none,  
Hangs my helpless soul on thee!”

this, this is the difficult self-denial that brings us to the Cross!

The celebrated Dr. Blair preached the Gospel of Christ many years before he came into an experimental acquaintance with the renewing power of the grace of God upon the heart. Going out one day into his field, where a deeply-pious farmer was at work—a man unlearned in the wisdom of this world, but deeply learned in the hidden mystery of God in the soul of the believer—he said, “John, what do you think is the hardest thing in religion?” “Well, why, your reverence,” replied John, “should you put this question to me, who am but an ignorant and unlearned man? Allow me to turn it back and ask you the question?” “Well,” said Dr. Blair, “it seems to me that the hardest thing in religion is to give up those pleasurable indulgences to which our nature is so prone, but which are contrary to the requirements of religion.” “Ah,” said John, “your reverence, I think that there is a harder thing in religion than even this.” “Well, what is it?” “It is to feel that we are wretched, and lost, and perishing, and to relinquish all other hope than that which rests in the atoning blood of the Redeemer.” In later years, and after a deeper experience of the hidden mystery of the life of God in the soul, the eloquent preacher

was accustomed to acknowledge the truth and value of the lesson taught him by his pious plowman.

Yes, at the very threshold this self-renunciation meets him who would enter the school of Christ. Though it may be difficult for the unrenewed heart to give up these worldly and sensual indulgences to which our nature is prone, and which are contrary to the spirit of Christ and the religion of the Redeemer, yet if the heart is thoroughly regenerated by the Holy Ghost, the very appetite, the very taste, the very passion for these indulgences is removed with this change of the heart. I remember some years ago, in the city of New York, during a gracious revival of religion, there came among the other seekers of religion a young lady to the altar. She came night after night; she seemed deeply penitent; we talked with and prayed for her; we endeavored to remove the difficulties out of the way and point her to Christ, yet she found no peace. At last, one night, after, I think, she had been coming to the altar for six weeks, she said to me in an intense agony of feeling, "Sir, do you think it is wrong to dance?" I found she had been passionately fond of that amusement, and her mind had been hesitating over it, questioning whether it could be contrary to religion in its spiritual character. Every other worldly pleasure she had long since given up. I gave her such instructions as a Methodist minister ought to give. She made up her mind that even this indulgence, to which she had so long clung, should be given up. That moment God came down, and a more glorious translation I have never looked upon.

Almost the first words she uttered were, "Sir, I have no desire to dance now." I tell you, brethren, when Divine grace renovates the heart, these thirstings for worldly indulgences are quenched under the influence of the Spirit of God. And now, let me say to you, brethren and sisters in the Church, fathers and mothers in the Church, whenever you come to look with apologetic feelings upon these sinful amusements which are sweeping away tens of thousands of our young converts from the love of Christ—when you come to look lightly upon these indulgences, and cease to restrain your children from them—I charge you before God that you are already losing the tenderness and spirituality of soul you once possessed. I warn you here, amid the solemn scenes of the sanctuary, that He whom you profess to love, demands that you teach self-denial to your children as well as practice it yourselves. Ye indulgent fathers and mothers, I warn you that you are treasuring up sorrow for coming years—planting thorns for the dying pillow.

After we have entered the school of Christ, we are to give ourselves to the guidance and direction of the teacher. When you send your son or your daughter to the academy or college, you expect them to come under the guidance, and discipline, and direction of the teacher. He is to prescribe the course of study, he is to select the text-book and to give the lessons to the child, and you well know that unless there is this subjection to the teacher, your child will utterly fail of the great ends of education—there will be a failure in the attainment of

discipline and in the acquisition of systematic and valuable knowledge. So with the disciple in the school of Christ. He is to take the course of study, the text-book prescribed by the Divine Teacher; and this is to be the lamp to lighten his path and guide him heavenward. Sometimes in the school the teacher will prescribe a hard lesson, a difficult problem to the child. And why is it done? That the child may be puzzled and discouraged—is that the object? No, but to lead him to grapple with that hard problem, to take hold of that difficult lesson and acquire a mastery over it; and thus the child acquires keenness and penetration of intellect as well as expansion and power of mind. All the intellectual power in the world is but the result of a grappling with obstacles and difficulties, and acquiring a mastery over them. And shall we wonder that in the school of Christ the same means of discipline should be resorted to? Worldly expectations are disappointed, worldly pleasures fail us, our earthly possessions take unto themselves wings and fly away, and we are left in poverty and in want. The loved ones, perhaps, blooming like flowers of paradise around the hearth-stone, and filling the whole house with the beauty and fragrance of their presence and the melody of their music, droop, wither, and die; and O, how the heart follows them down into the deep, dark grave, where their precious dust is gathered!

Brethren, I have a deep and heart-felt experience in this matter. Some years ago, when away on the calls of duty, death entered my own dwelling; the

angels came down and transplanted the beautiful flower which was just blossoming in my own household. The telegraph failed of its mission. I came and stood upon my own door-step, unconscious that death had been there. The sister who came to the door found language fail, and I went into the room where the little one of our flock lay cold as icy marble, beautiful even in death. O, how my head reeled! Darkness was around about me; it seemed as though every support was gone. I staggered to the side of the room; I bowed down before God, and it was only when I felt myself resting upon the immovable Rock that my heart took courage. Twenty-eight days afterward, another passed away. Brethren, ever since then heaven has been to me a reality. O, how thin the partition between the seen and the unseen! and often, at eventide, it seems to me I hear the music of familiar voices behind the curtain. O, there is a blessed discipline in this sorrow that melts the heart! These holy tears that we shed, what are they but the gathering dew of earth's night of darkness and of death? Blessed be God! they shall sparkle with immortal brightness in the sunlight of the resurrection morning.

Who has not observed, in this strange, this anomalous world of ours, how often it is that there is a close connection between suffering and trial and eminent piety? Have you never observed that, in the history of the men and women who have attained to eminent piety, what a close connection there is between their eminence in piety and their suffering? When John inquired, "Who are these so near the

throne? these so spotless in the purity of their robes? who are these sending forth such sweet melodies in praise of Him that sitteth upon the throne and to the Lamb?" the heavenly respondent said: "These are they that have come up out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Come up, not from the palaces of ease and luxury; come up, not from the offices of power and of influence; come up, not with lengthened procession and with worldly applause; but come up from the deep vales of human sorrow and suffering, where the heart has been chastened, subdued, and transformed; come up from the hovels of poverty and want; come up, borne on the wings of angels, and welcomed to the skies. O brethren! there is something sublime in this spiritual discipline by which the soul is nurtured for heaven. Even the great Captain of our salvation was made perfect through suffering. Let us, then, accept the cup of suffering, if Heaven gives it; we shall partake of the sweeter cup by and by.

"Yes, sorrow touched by Him, grows bright,  
With more than rapture's ray;  
As darkness shows us worlds of light,  
We never saw by day."

"And deny himself." I understand there is implied the denial of all indulgences inconsistent with the character of the religion of Christ. To deny one's self is to deny sinful desires and appetites; to cross and subdue evil passions and propensities. Pride is to be uprooted; the carnal mind is to be renewed; the love of the world to be supplanted by



the love of heaven ; sinful pleasures to give way to sacred delights. The true disciple of Christ will not, can not be of the earth earthy. How strong and expressive the language of our Savior to his disciples : “ Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he can not be my disciple.” O, how comprehensive, how exacting, that requirement of the blessed Redeemer ! And then we have the assurance that “ if ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.” My brethren, when I see what a Christian ought to be ; and then, when I look into my own heart, and collate its motives and its feelings, and see how much of the world still lingers there ; and when I look abroad upon the great mass of professing Christians, and see how much like the world they live, actuated by worldly motives, seeking after worldly pleasures, and thirsting and aspiring after worldly honors ; when I look at this outward picture, the Christian as he is, and then look upon the ideal picture, and see the Christian as he ought to be, I am often constrained to exclaim, with the disciple of old, “ Blessed Lord, either these are not thy words, or we are not Christians !” O, that the blessed Teacher would impart of his own spirit and life unto us, that by the purity of our hearts and the blamelessness of our lives, we may show to the world around us that we are the disciples of Christ, the taught of God !

But there is another thought right here. Many look upon the Gospel requirement of self-denial as being purely arbitrary, if not wholly unnecessary. So far from this, self-denial is really one of the essential

elements of success. It is not peculiar to religion, but is required every-where, if a man would do any thing. The man of the world can not prosecute his enterprises and gain riches without self-denial. He must give his time and his thoughts to the transactions of business ; he must forego pleasure, and must discipline himself to hard and enduring toil. The scholar does not attain learning, nor the orator acquire the highest power of eloquence, without self-denying effort. You know that the name of *Cicero* has become the very synonym of eloquence through all the world, and yet he gives us the master-key to all this when he says : " So much time as others devote to games and plays, so much I abstract to myself and devote to the study of sacred eloquence." This self-denial, then, instead of being a mere arbitrary requirement, is the element of spiritual discipline and nurture, without which the soul can not be built up in the faith and love of God.

Self-denial, however, does not imply that there is no enjoyment of soul. The man of business, who turns away from empty pleasures that he may acquire a fortune, finds a new joy in his very occupation. The self-denying *Cicero*, though he may not indulge in games and amusements, yet has his deep well-spring of joy. So also with the disciple of Christ. He denies sense, appetite, sensual and sinful indulgences ; but his soul does not fall back upon emptiness. The carnal is consumed that the spiritual may live and grow.

Nor, again, does self-denial imply that we are to derive no pleasure from earth and the senses.

Happiness was an end of creation. A thousand provisions in nature have the production of happiness in view, and but for this object they had never been made. Why the grandeur of these heavens, but that the soul might receive the impression of their glory? Why is the earth robed in her carpet of green; and why do the flowers bloom along our pathway and fill the air with their fragrance, but that they may impress the senses with their beauty, and pour happiness upon the soul? No; self-denial is not asceticism—not moroseness—not an incapacity to enjoy God's gifts to man. But it is the renunciation of the sinful and the base, that which degrades and ruins the soul, that the immortal may rise to the true dignity of its nature, and recreate its energies amid the higher felicities of the spiritual and the eternal.

Self-denial also implies entire consecration to Christ. There is no true discipleship without this. *What things were gain to him are to be counted loss for Christ.* He is to say with St. Paul, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord." He is to hold every thing of a worldly character in subordination to the claims of God and the interests of the soul. And why should he not? He has been redeemed by the blood of Christ. Infinite mercy has secured his pardon and adoption. Nothing can transcend his obligations. Falling upon his ear, and thrilling all the chords of sensibility in his soul, there ever comes to the child of God the appeal, "Ye are not your own; ye are bought with a price." That *price* filled heaven with wonder; it is the theme of the archangel's song;

it is the mystery of eternity. It demands thy love. Let this, then, be the language of thy heart :

“Henceforth shall no profane delight  
Divide this consecrated soul ;  
Possess it thou, who hast the right,  
As Lord and Master of the whole.”

Then shall we be wholly the Lord's ; and Christ shall dwell within us—life within life !

III. The third condition of discipleship in the school of Christ is *the assumption of the distinctive badge of Christianity*. It is expressed in our text by these words : “And take up his Cross.”

As the yoke was the symbol of Judaism, so the cross is the symbol of Christianity. There is significance in this symbol. It speaks of the Great Sacrifice “offered once for all.” There is power in it. It speaks to the heart.

I observe that I have used the word *symbol*. You comprehend the significance of that word. A symbol is the representative of some grand thought, some great interest, some sublime duty, or some divine right of humanity. There may not be a single sentence, not a word, not a letter upon it, and yet, as you see that symbol, how it stirs the heart and appeals to the consciousness of the individual ! Take our National flag—the time-honored and glorious “stars and stripes.” It is the symbol of an idea, dear to every American heart. That idea is *liberty*—the right and the capability of self-government in man. Wherever this flag waves over the wide earth, its utterance is one of freedom to the race.

What true American can behold that flag waving

in the breeze without having his heart stirred within him with love of country as well as devotion to our common interests? We may be placed in circumstances where we would feel the power of this symbol more intensely than I can express, or than even you at this moment can feel. A friend of mine in former years, an early student, long years ago emigrated to the South. He prosecuted the study of medicine, and settled in one of the Southern States, where he married, and his family was gathered around him. When this fearful war broke out—which, thank God, has now passed over and ended, I trust forever—acquainted with the resources and power of the Government, he said to his neighbors and his friends, “I fear we are wrong; I am certain only misfortune and calamity can come of this movement.” He, of course, was suspected; he was suddenly arrested and called before a large body of people, and he expected nothing but death. After the charges were made, they told him he might speak for himself. Speaking to me, he said, “If ever God helped me to speak it was then.” It was a man pleading for his life, and yet a man determined to stand by the truth. He recalled his past life for seventeen years among them; how he had lived, and walked, and labored among them; visited their sick, wept with them in sorrow, and attended at the burial of their dead. Before the close of his speech, he said, many of his audience were in tears. He left, was taken out under guard, and stood for one hour while they deliberated what should be done with him. He said it appeared to him that it was a fortnight. At

length he was called in, and was told that they had not been able to agree upon his execution, but to rest assured that he should not live with such sentiments as he had in that country, and he was then permitted to go home. The next day, as there was no regular preacher, he went into the church and stood up and preached to some of those very men that had been thirsting for his blood. For one year and a half, while dangers were gathering around him, he was compelled to hide in the fastnesses of the wilderness, in caves and among mountains, his little children stealing out early in the morning and at night with a little food, and winding their way through woods and threading the intricacies of the swamps that they might carry something for their famishing father to eat. His wife, worn out, sickened and went down to the grave, and he durst not even go out to shed the tear of sympathy and of sorrow over her remains. His children were reduced to a beggarly condition—a condition of nakedness such as I would not attempt to describe to you. He was accustomed now and then to steal out from his hiding-place and visit his home to counsel his daughters and one or two colored persons who had remained faithful to him through all his trials. One day as he was standing in front of his house looking out along the turnpike that led to the Yazoo River, he saw a troop of horsemen coming up over the hill. His first impression was, that it was a band of guerillas such as had been raiding through the country, plundering and robbing the inhabitants. He paused a moment before fleeing, and the question

came up to his agonized mind whether he might not just as well meet his fate then as to attempt to struggle longer. Just then, rising above the distant hill, and waving in the breeze, the flag of his country broke upon his sight. "No man," said he, "can tell how I felt then. The perspiration broke out from every pore of my face and skin, and I felt that I and my family were saved." Such is the power of a symbol! It almost awakes the dead to life.

Never, my brethren, was that flag dearer to us than now. As you behold its folds of beauty waving in the breeze, strange emotions—emotions never felt before—warm your heart and nerve your soul with love of country. That old flag speaks a new language now. It reminds of the loved ones who, at their country's call, have left our firesides and gone forth, upon the field of carnage and blood, to defend our liberties, imperiled by the assaults of traitors who would erect despotism upon the ruins of liberty. Our fields have been crimsoned with the best and bravest blood of the nation in its defense. Yes, my friends, a new tie binds us to that old flag. It has a new language. It symbolizes not only liberty, but *suffering and sacrifice for the sake of liberty*.

So, also, speaks the cross of Christ. It is the symbol of sacrifice and suffering for the redemption, not of a single nation, but of the whole world. It speaks of Infinite sacrifice, of agony unbounded, and that, too, that the guilty and perishing might be saved. No other symbol is so glorious. It comprehends the grandest idea that ever blessed and ennobled the race—the revealing of God in Christ

for the redemption of sinful man. It is the embodiment of all that is glorious in human destiny—disinthrallment from sin, the ennobling and exalting of our whole nature, the enthroning of this mortal with immortality, and the blending of the triumphant song of the redeemed on earth with that of the angels of God in heaven! The dying sinner looks up to the cross, and in it beholds the symbol of that wondrous power which brings life to the dying and the dead. The despairing penitent, beholding the cross, receives it as Heaven's pledge of mercy, and his soul revives with hope.

“And take up the Cross.” How shall this be done but by making it known in some expressive way that we belong to Christ? In all our sinful life we have given our public influence to the devil. We are now called upon to give it to Christ. God would have us make our religion known. To this end have the symbols of Christianity and the work of the Christian life been ordained. Why has Christ organized a visible Church upon the earth? Is it not, first, that the combined protection, and care, and help of that Church might be extended to each individual Christian? No Christian but what needs this help. He who imagines it otherwise deceives himself, and stands in imminent peril. And, second, was it not that, through an organized and combined energy, wielding material and intellectual as well as spiritual forces, Christianity might go forth to wage successful war against the powers of darkness? Christianity has a claim upon the cooperation of all her children, and that, too, in heaven's own appointed



way. The cause demands your help not out of but in the Church—not in some forms agreeable to your own fancy, but in the accredited forms of Christ's own ordaining.

I do not say that all ought to be Methodists. I can enjoy myself much better as a Methodist. I find the doctrines and usages of the Church in harmony with my views and feelings ; but that may not be the case with all. It may be as clearly the duty of another to become a Presbyterian or a Baptist as it is mine to be a Methodist. I will not question that. I think true catholicity of feeling requires this concession ; but I do believe before God that it is the duty of every renewed individual to become identified with some branch of the visible Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. I know some plead, "Why, I can be more useful—I can have greater influence over many of my associates and relatives by staying out of the Church than I can by coming into it ; for the moment I go into the Church they regard me in some sort as a partisan, and I lose influence over them." I tell you, this is all a temptation of the devil—a snare of Satan. It is a false assumption. You find your true place, and you come up to your true standard measure of influence when you become identified with the Church of the living God, and not till then. If you may decline this public identification of yourself with the cause of Christ, so may your neighbor. You have received common blessings, and are under common obligations. So may a third and a fourth neglect ; and thus on to the end, till no one stands by the cause. What then becomes of the Church ?

what of the cause of humanity? what of the cause of religion in the earth? All are perished. No. This refusal to bear the Cross as Christ has appointed, is a refusal to bear it at all. In waging their warfare against the powers of darkness in the earth, the armies of the living God must have organization and equipment. System and discipline must enter into the management of the war. Every soldier of the Cross must come up and stand in the ranks, shoulder to shoulder, that they may push the battle to the gates, and win over all the earth the glorious triumph of the Cross.

“Whosoever will come after me.” It is implied here that the taking up of the Cross is to be *an early work*. The disciple must *begin* with it. It is one of the earliest lessons of the school. The young soldier puts on his uniform, shoulders his rifle, and takes his place in the ranks under the banners of his country. He is not yet a veteran; he can not fight like one; he is awkward in the drill, unskilled in the march; but he hesitates not to put on the badge of the soldier; he glories in that he has consecrated himself to the work of saving the nation. From these raw recruits shall come forth, by and by, the veterans of a hundred battles, the victors of a hundred fields. So let the young soldier of the Cross at once take his place in the ranks; let him bear aloft the streaming banner of salvation; let him proclaim, if need be, to earth and heaven, that henceforth he battles for the Lord.

“Like him, the toil, the Cross sustain,  
Till glorious all, like him we reign.”

“Whosoever.” This is a *comprehensive word*. It means *every one*. It reaches to, and binds every follower of Christ. God has a work for all his children. There is none so poor in influence, and none so poor in talent, but he, too, may do something for the blessed Master. You may go down to the abodes of poverty and desolation, and you may speak words of sympathy to those who are despairing, and bid them hope again. You may do something for Christ. When nothing else is left, we may take up the Cross by the very patience of our suffering, and by the triumph of soul when all save faith in the great Redeemer has failed.

Nor is it alone in these more ostensible manifestations that the believer bears the Cross. He bears it by his very circumspection of life—nay, bears it thus, often unconscious and gloriously. By a single gesture or expression of countenance indicating sympathy with right and purity, or disapproval of wrong; or, even by refraining to speak or act when Christian principle lays its bands upon him, the Christian may as truly bear his Cross as in the most magnificent and heroic sacrifice made for the cause. Even a drop of cold water ministered to some suffering one, in the name of a disciple, is often a disciple’s testimony, and a disciple’s cross.

“Let him take up his Cross.” I mistake if here is not implied *continuance*. St. Luke says “daily.” The bearing of the Cross is not to be an irregular, fitful thing, the result of impulse or of accident; but a matter of principle, exercised and carried forward till it becomes also a thing of habit—incorporated

into all the life. Nor does the call of duty come without the opportunity for its exercise. We doubt whether a single day or even hour ever passes without affording the Christian some opportunity of acknowledging Christ by some act of self-denial, some token of obedience, or some effort of Christian love. The shining of the Christian's light is thus not erratic and flickering, but luminous and glorious—shining more and more unto the perfect day.

Nor should we exclude the idea of *suffering for Christ*. The cross is the symbol of suffering as well as of grace. In storm, as well as in sunshine, the true disciple will maintain the truth and principles of his cause. The age of martyrdom has passed, and we too often speak as though its spirit no longer remained in the Church. But should the age of martyrdom return, I have no doubt it would find the *spirit* of the martyrs still in the Church. Men of heroic virtue would brave its fiery ordeal, and timid women, too, inspired with the lofty faith of Jesus, would welcome the martyr's stake, and in holy ecstasy triumph in the midst of the burning flame. No, the spirit of martyrdom has not died out of the Church; it lives, and will live so long as the spirit of Christ dwells in the heart of his people.

My brethren, looking up to the Great Head of the Church triumphant, we sing:

“By faith we see the glory  
To which thou shalt restore us;  
The Cross despise for that rich prize  
Which thou hast set before us.

*And if thou count us worthy,  
We each, as dying Stephen,*

*Shall see thee stand at God's right hand,  
To take us up to heaven."*

And O, are there not times when the inspiration of that melody takes such hold upon our hearts that we can in truth say, "Neither count I my life dear unto myself?" This is the genuine spirit of martyrdom; its roots are deeply and firmly imbedded in entire consecration to Christ. He that has made this consecration will bear his Cross amid storms of persecution, and will triumph amid flames of fire.

IV The fourth condition of discipleship is expressed in the words, "*and follow me.*" It implies that we are to follow the Great Teacher. This is a figure drawn from the custom of the ancient philosophers. They had no seats of learning, no large buildings as we have for educational purposes, with libraries, apparatus, and all conveniences for instruction. They were often without home themselves, and journeyed from place to place. Their disciples followed after them; and, walking along the highway in the open country, or along the streets of the city, or sitting beneath the shade of a tree, or upon the sea-shore, or in the market-place, they discoursed of philosophy to their disciples. So, also, the chosen disciples followed Christ from place to place while he was upon earth. This usage is employed to illustrate the relation of the Christian disciple to the Great Teacher.

We may not thus literally tread in the footsteps of Christ, for, having accomplished the end of his earthly mission, he has ascended up to the glory he had with the Father before the world was; and yet,

in an important sense, we may follow Christ. He is the Divine type and pattern after which all his followers are to be molded. He is "the image of God" revealed in the glorious Gospel, that "we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, *may be* changed into the same image from glory to glory as by the spirit of the Lord." He is the great type of all that is glorious in redeemed humanity on earth and in heaven. The ambition of the disciple is to be like his Master. And the Christian, beholding in the precious promises of God that "every one that is perfect shall be as his Master," feels in his heart a divine impulse to leave the things that are behind and press forward to those that are before, till "he shall come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." Not all the models of greatness and glory on earth can turn his soul away from its perpetual longings after the image of the Divine and the immortal. With David, he can say, "I have set the Lord always before me." He is the ideal of all my longings, and "I shall be satisfied when I awake with his likeness."

We may become like him in *purity of character*. The purity of that character, how transcendent! The judge who condemned him, the sinner who rejects him, and the infidel who denies him—all unite in willing or unwilling testimony to the purity of his character. We may not be like him in power, we may not be able to still the tempest, to heal the sick or to raise the dead; but we may be like him

in purity, and this is the grand consummation of the Christian life. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." No wonder that the inspired writer exclaims in view of this glorious truth, that "every one that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure!" Then, too, it is declared, "in him is no sin," and it is the very function of the Divine office of Christ to make us like himself; for "ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins."

"Savior from sin, we thee receive,  
From all indwelling sin,  
Thy blood, we steadfastly believe,  
Shall make us thoroughly clean.  
Since thou wouldst have us free from sin,  
And pure as those above,  
Make haste to bring thy nature in,  
And perfect us in love."

Then, too, we may follow Christ by imitating *the benevolence of his life*. "Who went about doing good" is a eulogy worthy of the Son of God. But, though grand and godlike, it is a eulogy that may be won and worn by the humblest of all his disciples. His benevolence sprung from genuine sympathy of heart; it took hold of the very fountains of his nature, and exhausted all its resources as well as all its hours. It was comprehensive, encircling in its wide and warm embrace every member of the race. None so poor, so dark, so degraded, lost, or remote, but that the Redeemer's heart yearned to clasp them in the arms of his love, and to bestow upon them the blessings of his grace. Sublime is

the path of the Christian when he thus follows in the footsteps of the Great Teacher. His life is all luminous with divine teaching; his ascending pathway is crowned with the sunlight of God. On earth God's suffering and sorrowing ones, relieved, and cheered, and encouraged to hope through his ministry, shall pronounce blessings upon him. And in heaven, the reward of him that ministered the cup of water to the fainting disciple shall be his forever.

Then, again, we may follow Christ by imitating *his patience under provocations*. How divine! how godlike the patience of Christ! Unmoved, save to pity, he endured the obloquy and the persecutions heaped upon him by his adversaries. They malign his character; they pervert his words; distort his actions; charge him with satanic alliance; with sedition; with blasphemy. His disciples weary him with their misapprehensions of his mission and their want of faith; one of them betrays him; the men he had come to bless and save combine for his destruction; his disciples forsake at the critical moment and flee; indignities are heaped upon him; and then comes the dreadful agony of the Garden, and the suffering of the cross! Yet amid all, how patient! The divinity is resplendent in the patience of Christ! O, thou suffering Redeemer, teach us thy patience! endow our souls with thine own godlike virtue! then shall we be thy followers indeed!

Then, too, we may follow Christ by *imitating the submissiveness of his will to that of the Father*. "Then said he," when about to descend to our lost



earth on his errand of mercy, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." And when toiling, suffering, and hungry—buoyed up by the consciousness of his great mission—he could say to his disciples, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish his work." Even amid the agony of the Garden, when frail humanity was shrinking beneath its load, how sublimely rose the faith of the Son of God—"My Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, *thy will be done.*" Can we wonder, then, that the Savior, overlooking all that was merely natural in the relationships of life, should declare, "Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." Thus, brethren, "Ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise."

Finally, we may imitate his *constant yearning for heaven*. The only attractions earth had for him were those connected with his mission. He might have reveled in the beauties of nature and art; enjoyed the society of the learned and great; explored the hidden mysteries of philosophy; wielded influence and power among men; surrounded himself with all the sources of worldly pleasure; risen to state and empire. But none of these things could for one moment chain him to earth. His spirit soared upward; the beauties for which his soul longed were those of heaven; the companionships his soul desired were those of the assembly that is "without fault" before the throne of God. And the throne upon which he would sit was that same throne from which he descended to come to our poor, bleeding earth.

He willingly staid on earth his allotted time, because he had here a mission and a work. But gladly, at any moment, even the proudest and most joyful, would he have soared away back to his native heaven, could his earthly mission been accomplished without his presence here. So will it be with the disciple who "is *as* his lord." He will have earnest and constant longings for heaven. He desires to behold the King in his beauty. He is looking for a city that hath foundations. All along in his pilgrimage his heart breaks forth into singing—

"Jerusalem, my happy home !  
My soul still pants for thee ;  
Then shall my labors have an end,  
When I thy joys shall see."

Thus, beloved, have we sought to exhibit to you the conditions of discipleship in the school of Christ. And though we have already detained you so long, we can not close without a few suggestions called forth by the subject.

1. How glorious the privilege of becoming a disciple in the school of Christ! It is glorious, if we consider *the character of the Teacher*. The student esteems it the highest advantage and honor to enjoy the instructions of the great masters in human learning. How would the student in philosophy glory in being permitted to have for his instructors such masters as Newton and Bacon! How would the student in geology delight to go forth, guided by a Hugh Miller, and trace, under his instructions, the footprints of the Creator as impressed upon the everlasting rocks! But, behold, you are invited to become

the disciple of Him who was present when the mountains were settled and the hills brought forth. In astronomy, how would the student delight to have Galileo or Herschel for his guide, as he explored the systems of the universe! But, behold, here is a Teacher that "tellethe the number of the stars, and calleth them by their names." Or could Wesley, that great master in theology, come back to earth, how gladly would the young minister go forth to receive his instructions! He would traverse land and sea to gaze upon his calm and serene countenance—to listen to his brief, yet pregnant periods, as he unfolded the doctrines of the Cross! Or, were a sainted Fletcher to return to earth, and were we permitted at this hour to go into his presence, and listen to his words as he discoursed of the deep things of the life of God in the soul, with what holy rapture would our hearts bound! How thronged would be the place of assembly! But, behold, a greater than Wesley, a greater than Fletcher is here! Thou mayest come into his presence, sit down at his feet, feel the throbbings of his great heart as it beats in sympathy with thine own; and from his own lips mayest thou receive the hidden wisdom of the sublime mystery of God in Christ.

2. Then, again, the privilege is glorious, if we consider *the science taught*. There is something grand and elevating even in the mere human sciences. They clear away the films from the mental eye; they endow the intellect with a keener vision, a broader scope, and a mightier power. But there is no science so all-comprehending as that of the great

mystery of godliness ! no other science grapples with problems so profound or of such transcendent importance. How we may cross the ocean from continent to continent with safety and speed, freighted with the commerce of the world, has been regarded a problem worthy of the noblest efforts of science and art ; but this science would teach us how to navigate, not the sea of time, but to sail out upon the boundless and glorious ocean of immortality. The schools of astronomy would teach us how to scan the distant heavens, and wonder at the workmanship of the divine, yet unseen Architect ; but this science would conduct us into the very presence and glory of the Architect himself.

My brethren, the time will come, away in the distant ages of eternity, when we shall have explored and mastered every mystery of mere human science ; when all the wonders of chemistry—and greater wonders than the science has yet dreamed of—shall be completely solved ; when the soul shall look through and through all the hard and crabbed problems of mathematics as by intuition ; when all the deep and mysterious problems of our spiritual nature shall be clear as the sunbeam. The time will come when on spirit wing we shall have gone out and explored the remotest star that revolves in its orbit on the very outskirts of the creation of God ; and when the human intellect shall toy like a child at play, with all the garnered treasures of science and knowledge through the ages. But there will still be one prob'lem, so deep in its mystery, so towering in its grandeur, so infinite in the amplitude of its scope, and so

eternal in the unfolding of its grandest and most glorious results, that the loftiest created intellect of earth or of heaven will still be in the first steps of the ascending scale of its mystery. It is

“The science and the song of eternity.”

And all along through the ages of illimitable being the soul shall unceasingly rise in the study; new wonders and new glories shall excite and keep alive its awakened interest; grander views shall break upon its vision; and new and still sweeter melodies shall continually be added to its undying song forever.

3. Then, again, how *easy and compatible are the conditions of admission* into the school of Christ! The student who would seek admission into the college or university is subjected to large expense and to years of study and preparation. Some fail from want of means; others from want of health; and still others are found wanting in mental capacity. But, thanks be to God, no long, preliminary training is required to enter the school of Christ! “Whosoever will,” let him come; and let him come *now*, for “now is the accepted time.” Nor is any large expenditure of means required; for the admission is “without money and without price.” No one need fear rejection, for the warrant of God is, “He that cometh unto me I will in nowise cast out;” and it standeth sure forever. Unfitness shall not exclude you, for

“All the fitness he requireth  
Is to feel your need of him.”

Nor should you count yourself, however guilty, or wretched, or despairing, as being outside of this gracious condescension of the Divine Teacher. "Whosoever will!" how broad, how comprehensive the invitation! I thank God that, as a Christian minister, I may go out and proclaim every-where to dying men, "Whosoever will." I may follow the sinner in his downward path, till upon the very verge of the pit of everlasting woe, and there I may whisper in his dying ear, "Whosoever will;" and if he will return and believe in Christ, he shall receive salvation. The trembling, sin-smitten sinner has only to look and live.

4. Finally, consider also the end or object of all this training in the school of Christ. When you put your son and daughter in the school of education you never once dream of their remaining there forever. It is only a few years of preliminary training, in which their faculties shall be enlarged and their minds stored with knowledge, so that they may come forth prepared for a wider sphere of influence and of usefulness in the world. The day of graduation will come by and by. It is the day that is to crown many an anxious effort. The toil, and care, and watchfulness of years center in it. Parents and friends welcome it with garlands and rejoicing. *Preparation* is now completed, and the young student goes forth to enter upon the great mission of life. So, also, it is in the school of Christ. All here is preparatory. We are not to remain in it forever. It is a training for a higher mission. The day of graduation will soon come. Ah, my friends, call it

not death! It is only graduating from the school of training and preparation to the mission of glory and immortality. The knowledge acquired in the school of Christ below, and the talents and graces cultivated here, shall have wider play and grander scope as we go out the messengers of God on missions of mercy to myriads of created beings in all worlds and through all ages.

One of my early friends in the period of my educational life, a young man of great interest and promise, left the college and went into the ministry. He was one of those beings gifted with rare spiritual power—a sort of magnetic spiritual influence. It is a power that takes hold upon the hearts of men. God blessed him in his ministry. He was the instrument of the conversion in the brief period of three or four years of as many hundreds of souls. At last the hand of God was laid upon him, and he was placed upon the bed of death. Why is it that the gifted and the good are so often called away? Why is it that those whom it seems the Church and the world have so much need of are so often called hence? I know not, brethren, but I suppose the Master hath need of them elsewhere. These faculties do not die; these powers that have been trained and nurtured for usefulness do not stagnate in death. It would be a libel upon the wisdom and the providence of God to entertain such a thought. The Master, I doubt not, hath need of them in a higher and better sphere. I said this young man was lying upon the bed of death. Already insensibility had come over him. His aged father was standing upon

one side of the bed, and his loving mother upon the other. He was their only son, the son in whom their hope and their love centered. They were shedding tears such as will gush from the heart under circumstances like these. Arousing from insensibility, he looked upon his father, and then, casting upon his mother a look of inexpressible tenderness, said, "Mother, father, why do you weep? You did not weep a few years ago when I graduated from the university, but you came up to welcome and congratulate me. Congratulate me now, for I am going from this bed of suffering to the presence and glory of the Redeemer."

Such, beloved, is the transition of the disciple of Christ. Call it not death. What is death to the believer but graduating from the school of Christ to enter into his presence and glory? Let us, then, scatter garlands and roses upon the graves of loved ones who have gone to be "forever with the Lord." Let us not mourn for them as though lost, but bid them joy as having obtained the crown of life.

Brethren, I leave my message, in the name of Christ, with your hearts this morning. May you seek to be faithful, earnest disciples in the school of the Great Teacher; and, trained, nurtured, and disciplined, perhaps even in the school of sorrow and affliction, here, may you by and by graduate to a higher and grander sphere to glorify God among the angels of light forever! *Amen!*



## VIII.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL OF THE PRESENT  
THE GERM OF THE CHURCH OF  
THE FUTURE.

DELIVERED BEFORE THE STATE SUNDAY SCHOOL CONVENTION OF OHIO,  
AT DELAWARE, MAY 23, 1865.

*"Then were brought unto him little children."* Matt. xix, 13.

THIS transaction is pregnant with sublime teaching. It is the foreshadowing of the relation of childhood to Christ and to the Church of God.

In reply to the cavilings of the Pharisees, our Lord had just enunciated the law of marriage under the Gospel dispensation. It was fitting that, in the same connection, he should enunciate the relations of the children to the Church. The beautiful incident in the text afforded him an opportunity to do so. *Then were brought unto him little children.* They were *little children*—too small to come themselves, and were therefore *brought*. The loving and devoted mothers had not learned that theory of some godless professing Christians, that the child must be left to grow up without bias on the subject of religion, so that when he comes to years of understanding he may be free to choose for himself. They only knew

that the Savior was there, and that his heart and his hands were full of blessings for little children, and they hasted that those blessings might fall upon the heads and hearts of their unconscious babes.

They were brought *unto him*. It was not in any metaphorical or symbolical sense that they were brought. Nor was it an approach through the priest, or the visible Church—nor yet through any representative, or ceremony, or sacrament; but directly to the blessed Savior himself. For they were brought *unto him*. The Savior's approval of the act, and his acceptance of these little ones, was equally expressive and emphatic. For "he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them."

The breadth and significance of this transaction shine forth conspicuously as our Savior rebukes the narrow-mindedness and bigotry of his disciples, who were offended at this familiarity of approach to their Lord. *Suffer little children to come unto me*. He does not say, suffer *these* little children—but *suffer little children*—all little children, every-where, and through all time. In the wide sweep of his heavenly condescension, he comprehends the childhood of the race.

This was spoken for all time. Just as the law of marriage, here enunciated, was to be fixed and permanent—to endure through all ages; so was this law of childhood's approach to Christ. And thus the voice of the blessed Redeemer comes down through all ages, addressed to all peoples, and kindred, and classes in all Christian lands—"Suffer little children to come unto me."

\ There are two principal educational methods of

bringing "little children" to Christ. One is by the teaching and influence of Christian parents; the other by the teaching and influence of the Sunday school. Neither of these is designed to conflict with or to supersede the other. In fact, one is the supplement of the other. The former has special reference to the family; the latter has special reference to the Church.

The Sunday school is not the Church; not the Church in part; not a substitute for the Church. Nor are its labors to be a substitute for any function of the Church. Yet it is intimately blended with the Church; and between the two reciprocal influences are exerted. Not only does the Church act upon the Sunday school—breathing into it the element of spiritual life and power; but, in turn, the Sunday school reacts upon the Church—not, indeed, by processes so apparent, and with results so speedily realized—but in a manner real and vital. It is this latter thought—the influence of the Sunday school ultimately upon the Church—to which we would direct attention as a theme fitting to the occasion, and one calculated to inspire us with juster and broader views of the mission and work of the Sunday school. The great truth we would present, and in the light of which we would endeavor to ascertain what shall be the character of the Church of the future, is this: **THE SUNDAY SCHOOL OF THE PRESENT IS THE GERM OF THE CHURCH OF THE FUTURE.**

In this brief sentence we have enunciated the mission of the Sunday school. It comprehends at once the philosophy, the obligation, and the promise

of that great enterprise. It is an enunciation that needs no elaboration and no proof. Its force and conclusiveness must at once carry conviction to every mind. If, then, we can ascertain the mission of the Sunday school of the present—the work it is designed to accomplish—we may obtain a clear and definite idea of the Church of the future.

What question can there be of more transcendent importance to the race than this? The Church of the future! what shall be its character? what its destiny? what shall it achieve for God, for humanity? It may be something for me to know what is to be the future of our civil and social institutions—the future of science, of art, of agriculture, of commerce! whether our glorious Republic—enlightened, *united*, *free*—is still to continue to sway the destiny of empire upon the face of the earth, and be the home of a great and happy people, notwithstanding the desolating storm that raged so fiercely against it! whether science shall continue to reveal new wonders in the creation of God! whether art, and commerce, and agriculture shall continue to beautify the face of the earth and cement the great brotherhood of man! All these are questions of deep interest; the weal of humanity is more or less bound up in them. But it is of still higher moment for me to know what shall be the character of the Church of the future. For in this question all others center. If she shall stand forth in the light and image of her living Head, then shall art, and science, and agriculture, and commerce—all become the handmaids of righteousness; and “the wilderness and the solitary

place shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose."

We said the Sunday school is the germ of the Church of the future. A single fact is demonstration of this. Take the statistics of any Christian Church, and you will find, year after year, in a great majority of instances, that the number of conversions among the members of the Sunday schools is nearly equal to, and in some instances exceeds, the accessions to the Church itself. Take, for example, the Methodist Church. \ The year before the opening of the war, over against a net increase of 20,102 members, there were, in about three-fourths of the Church from which reports were received, 19,517 conversions of persons connected with the Sunday schools. In 1859, against a net increase of 17,790, there were, in about three-fourths of the Annual Conferences, 20,580 conversions of persons connected with the Sunday schools. In 1861, the year after the war commenced, against a net increase of only 1,924, there were reported 17,498 who had passed from the Sunday school into the Church. During the year 1864, the net increase of members and probationers in the Church was only 4,926, while the number of conversions in the Sunday schools was 18,892! Now, it should also be stated, in order that we may comprehend the full force of the argument, that while the report of membership is full and complete, the report of conversions in the Sunday schools is wholly neglected in a large number of the Churches. Yet in spite of the fact that so many of the Churches fail to report the conversions in the Sunday schools, the general statistics

show that, during the past eighteen years, 285,730 converted souls have passed from the Sunday schools into the bosom of that Church. They are now, many of them, to be found in her ministry, among her teachers, on her mission fields, and among the strong laymen who are bearing the burdens and performing the labor of the Church.

What we have here stated of the Methodist denomination is probably true, in substance, of every other Christian denomination that is actively engaged in the Sunday school work. • My brethren, we have not yet comprehended half the importance of our Sunday school work, nor half the magnitude of the fruits it shall yet yield to the Church and to the world. It is the nursery of the Church ; not only shaping the character of its future members, but permeating its very heart with a spirit, an energy, and an impulse that shall move onward forever.

Some years since, a noted horticulturist took me to see his orchard of young peach trees. It was a splendid sight. Thousands of trees standing in long rows, and comprising all the richest varieties of that delicious fruit. Whatever science, and skill, and carefulness could contribute to its perfection was secured. I said to him, "I presume you are very careful in the selection of your peach-kernels in order to get the rarest quality of fruit." "No," replied he ; "we plant whatever comes to hand, and then we bud them. Every one of those trees was budded." This brought to light a curious fact in horticulture. Does a gardener wish to raise a rare and splendid fruit, he takes a bud or sprout from a bearing tree and

grafts it. No matter how poor a variety the stock may be upon which he grafts it. The bud will preserve its own identity; it will grow up, and bear its own fruit. Thus the tree will be made to bear a fruit entirely different from, and infinitely superior to, that which its own nature would have produced. Our Sunday school system is a system of spiritual horticulture. It is designed to ingraft into the young heart "the incorruptible seed" of the Word of God. No matter how unpromising the variety or the individual. It will take root; it will grow up; preserve its own identity; blossom in unfading beauty; send forth heavenly odors; and ripen into immortal fruit. My brethren, let us learn a lesson from the horticulturist. Let us have more faith in the vitalizing and regenerating power of that "incorruptible seed," which it is our business to ingraft into the mind and heart of the child!

The three grand elements that control the movements of the age, and are to determine the destiny of humanity—that are to move the Church and the world to grander achievements and nobler destiny—are *knowledge, moral convictions and sympathies, and personal activities.*

Elaborate these three propositions; namely, 1. That the Sunday school imparts the right kind of knowledge; 2. That it cultivates the right kind of moral convictions and sympathies; and, 3. That it calls forth the right kind of personal activities—establish these propositions, and you have the argument.

We have not time to elaborate these points further; but turn now to inquire—in the light which

they shed upon the subject—what shall be the character of the Church of the future? What shall be the outgrowth of this heavenly germ? what the fruit it shall bear in the coming ages?

1. It shall be a Church having a *clear and distinct conviction of a personal and holy God*. We say a *personal* God! holy, wise, just, powerful!—a God that can not look upon sin with the least degree of allowance. Infidelity has its god. It will take what it calls *the laws of the universe*, and out of them frame its god, just as the idolater carves his idol out of the senseless rock. It will conjure up a sort of essence of nature or a great aggregate of being, and with high-sounding phrase and bewildering eulogy, call it the Supreme, the Infinite—God. But what does it all amount to? It imposes no responsibility, makes no distinction between vice and virtue, creates no moral obligation, speaks of no *personal* immortality—reveals no heaven and no hell!

It is the mission of the Sunday school to take up this great idea of a *personal God*—a God of judgment, almighty, ever-living, every-where present, whose eye is always looking down upon us, beholding the evil and the good: it is the mission of the Sunday school to take up this great idea, which lies at the foundation of all knowledge and all science, and to write it upon the heart and conscience of the young. And when once written there, it will remain ineffaceable and vital—an entity forever. And around it will be clustered in glorious harmony, all those other sublime unfoldings of the divine mercy for the redemption and salvation of man.



What is the great want of the present day? in our social life, in our business, in our courts of justice, in our halls of legislation, in our politics, in our executive departments in the State and nation? What is the great want of the day and the hour? Some will say one thing, and some another. The sophist will come in with his demand for "broader views," the scholar for his "higher culture," the reformer with a plea for his humanitarian doctrines. One will say patriotism, another energy, life, zeal. One will tell us the uprooting of slavery, of intemperance, and the other great moral and social crimes of the age; another, the universal prevalence of democracy, the practical establishment of the great brotherhood of man. But I will tell you what this great want is—that which lies at the foundation of all that is right, and will be efficient in removing all that is wrong. It is *conscience—individual and public conscience!* Give us that, and it will regulate all the rest.

But without this idea of a *personal* and holy God, conscience has no foundation—nothing on which it can rest—nothing to give it voice and authority. "Demonstrations," and "evidences," and "logical deductions," however clear and conclusive, unable to reach the heart incrustated by sin, may fail of their purpose. Like rays of light impinging upon the iceberg, they are reflected back without effect. It requires something more than logic to create conscience. The heart must be touched, the moral nature renewed. The Sunday school takes up this work in the only effectual method. It proposes to

give to the public mind *a conscience*, by writing, in indelible characters, upon the heart of the young, the first principles of conscience—the *great truth of a living, personal God*.

2. The Church of the future will be composed of men and women *trained in the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures from their childhood*. It was one of the commendations bestowed upon Timothy, as giving him preëminent qualifications for the ministry of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus, and rendering him peculiarly worthy of the confidence of the Church, that he had known the Scriptures from his youth. There is something sublime in this power of early religious culture; this taking hold of the mind and the heart of the young and training them for God and heaven. The Hindoos understand it, and the Shastas—the books of their religion—are made the principal text-books in the education of their children. The Mussulmans understand it; and, as the new-born infant comes into life, the first sound that is made to fall upon the ear of the young immortal is, “There is no god but God, and Mohammed is his prophet.” And all along it is repeated till it becomes one of the inwrought maxims of his childhood, strong and vigorous to control even his manhood—the Alpha and the Omega of his creed—“There is no god but God, and Mohammed is his prophet.” So let there fall upon the ear of the new-born infant in all Christian lands—“There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” Let the nursery ring with the sweet song of redemption; let the Sunday school repeat the

echo; and thus shall the heart of the generation to come after us be wedded to the Cross of Christ.

No people are more careful of the religious education of their children than the Jews. And what is the result? You can see it even now, wherever the peeled and wasted remnant of God's ancient people has been scattered abroad. Christianity has been overtopping Judaism, and pressing upon it with almost resistless force, for over eighteen centuries; and time, and providence, and God himself, during all that period, have been demonstrating to the world that Jesus Christ was the true Messiah. The Jewish faith has been subjected to obloquy, and the Jew himself been a hissing and a by-word in all lands. Yet their ranks remain almost unbroken. The children cling, with the tenacity of life, to the religion of their fathers. No argument can unsettle their faith; no pride can shame them out of it; and no disability or suffering can compel them to relinquish it. Judaism, at the present day, is no faint representation of one of its own miracles—the unconsumed bush in the midst of the flaming fire.

But if so much has been done for Judaism by the force and power of an early religious education, how much more might the same agency accomplish for the Christian Church! If it can do so much to perpetuate error, how much more might it do to perpetuate and spread the truth! If it can give Judaism its potency of endurance amid all the disabilities that press upon it, how ought it, when the full measure of its power has been attained in the Church of Christ in the coming ages, to cause that

Church to shine forth the light and glory of the whole earth!

3. *Enlarged liberality shall characterize the Church of the future.* Before us is a boy, smart, active, shrewd. He is growing up to manhood with no other idea than that the great end of life is to become rich; that these riches are all for himself, for his own use and gratification; and that he is not responsible, either in this world or in the next, for what he does with his own. It never enters into his thoughts that God and humanity have claims upon him. He never looks outside the narrow circle of personal and selfish interests. Or if he looks beyond, it is only as a mere matter of fancy, or of cold, unconcerned speculation. He has no practical discipline in charitable uses and works. All the currents of thought, of feeling, and of habit center in himself. What can you hope for a manhood formed under auspices like these? Certainly nothing better than that he will become a respectable worldling. The Church can hope for but little from him. The world can hope for little. All his education, all his views, his habits and aims, preclude the idea of his looking much beyond himself—at least preclude the idea of any enlarged liberality springing from him. He may become converted, be brought into the Church, get to heaven; but that is about all that can be hoped for in his case—a sort of good miser, or self-indulgent worldling—who has some desire to get to heaven, but do n't want it to cost him much, and who do n't really concern himself much whether any body else gets there or not.

But, my friends, there is nothing monstrous in all this; it is the natural outgrowth of the training received. No mariner ever took his course more directly for the port he entered at last than does this mode of training, at the very outset direct the course of the young immortal to the end he at last reached. And yet what is this but the training of even the children of the Church, to a very large extent, before the age of Sunday schools dawned upon the Christian world? Some of the terrors of the law, especially the terrible judgments of God upon the wicked, were impressed upon the minds of the children now and then. But who thought of stirring their young hearts by the cheering songs of Zion? Who ever thought of allying them to the Church of God in the active faith and love of the Christian life? or of enlisting their efforts in behalf of the missionary cause? Thus, all along the Christian Church has allowed Satan to start in advance in the race. She has contented herself with some hypothetical, theoretical, or doctrinal hold upon the child, conceding to Satan the full possession of all its practical and active energies. Thus many a soul has been cheated out of half its birthright; humanity and heaven have been robbed of priceless treasures.

But just now another boy comes up before me. His eye sparkles with intelligence; his countenance radiates with social affections and heavenly virtues. His aspirings are after truth and goodness; his model of character and life the blessed Redeemer. His sympathies are quick and deep, his love exalted and pure. Part of childhood's treasures he gladly

consecrates to Christ, and thus childhood's truest and best lesson of benevolence he learns. Into all his little plans, and purposes, and gains, the not unwilling thought enters, *part for the missionary cause*. What will be the result of all this, as this boy advances to manhood? I will tell you. This man will come to feel that he is a part of, and a worker in, all that is great and good. The weal of the Church, of humanity, the salvation of a dying world, will enter into all his thoughts, and plans, and aims. Such a man will work as truly for God while amassing riches as he who, with fervid eloquence, preaches Christ, or he who, with self-sacrificing devotion, toils in the missionary field. The spheres of labor are different, but the work is one. For the end of all is *doing* and *giving* for Christ. O for the multiplication of such laymen in the Church of God!

My brethren, it is one of the missions of the Sunday school to enrich the Church with just such men. The fruit is already beginning to be realized. Look at the increased interest in the missionary cause. Why this flaming out of missionary zeal? this activity, this swelling up of missionary collections? I tell you, we owe it to the Sabbath school more than to any other agency—nay, I am almost inclined to say, *more than to all other causes combined*. Heretofore, one man, now and then, at periods far remote—one in a thousand—broke away from the trammels of early habit and education, and exercised a princely benevolence, giving to the world the bright example of business talents consecrated to Christ. What monuments such men have left behind

them! How hallowed the savor of their influence! How precious their memory! Alas, that there have been so few of them! My brethren, it is the mission of the Sunday school to fill the Church with just such men; to take hold of childhood before it becomes hardened in human selfishness, and plant in the heart the germs of a noble benevolence. And when the seed sown shall ripen into fruit, then, side by side with those who preach for Christ, shall be found in all departments of business men who plan and prosecute the largest enterprises for the single purpose of having it in their power to do good.

4. Again, the Church of the future shall be *composed of men and women, early converted, and thoroughly trained for efficient labor in the cause of Christ*. In times past, too many of the converts of the Church have been too old and their habits too fixed to do much for the cause of Christ. Their day of activity was gone; it was too late for them to become inspired with large and liberal views; too late to effect much in the way of cultivating their own talents even. But how different, where the young are trained up from very childhood to love the Savior, to feel that the Church is their *home*; trained up to know what she is doing for the redemption of the world, and to sympathize with and to labor in all her grand and glorious enterprises!

When the iron legislator of Sparta would make a great military nation—a nation of heroes—he took the boys, the very children, and trained them up from very childhood under the hardy discipline of military life. And what was the result? There

came forth the grand old heroes of Thermopylæ, standing up for the defense of their country ; single-handed and alone, bidding defiance to the leagued powers of oppression. So let us take the children of the present age ; let us teach their hands to war and their fingers to fight ; let us marshal them in the great army of the living God. And by and by they shall come forth the mighty champions of the conflict ; they shall stand up in the last Thermopylæ, where Satan marshals the powers of darkness for the final conflict, and there shall they win the victory for Christ.

5. The Church of the future shall be *one of wide and wise adaptations*. Is the Church to make the field of her activities broad and comprehensive ? How shall she do it, but by adapting her agencies to the work ? ! We need only to look out over our own country, over this vast valley of the West, with its broad prairies, fertile plains, and teeming population, to learn a lesson upon this subject—why, in the midst of our public schools, in the midst of our churches, and in the very heart of our Christian civilization, *three-fourths of all the children are growing up without religious education*. Let the fact come out : there are—without counting in the colored children of the slave States, or the increased destitution of the white children in the South occasioned by the war—nearly *two millions* of children in this great valley—in the heart of our country—in the heart of our civilization—who are to-day outside the sphere of ordinary religious instruction.

They are found in almost countless numbers in



all our large cities ; they swarm along all our frontier settlements. They are growing up in very heathenism all around us. From their present associations you have nothing but evil to expect ; from their parents nothing to hope. How, then, shall they be reached ? To the church of God they never come ; nor would the public ministry reach their case. But charm them into the Sabbath school ; teach them its lessons of purity and truth ; tune their voices to the melody of its songs ; bring their hearts into sympathy with its upward and heavenly tendencies, and you will have done much toward neutralizing the influence of ungodly associates—nay, even of ungodly parents.

But when this power comes to be wielded by a whole Church, disciplined and trained to its use from childhood, how shall its force be augmented and its triumphs multiplied ! Even now, ten thousand trophies have been won to Christ by its agency. Many of the brightest luminaries that have adorned the Church of the living God, have received their baptism of fire at its altar. And souls now resplendent among the thrones of heaven, evermore mingle in their halleluiahs that ascend up before God, thanksgiving for the Sabbath school on earth.

6. Finally, from this great enterprise we augur a most glorious future for the Church of Christ upon the earth. The glorious fruits already realized are the pledge of still grander results in the future. Since the organization of the Sabbath school—not one century ago—the era in the Church has been one of aggressive action. The Church has been

quickened into a livelier faith and a holier devotion. Christianity was then almost every-where acting upon the defensive, striving to repel the rude assaults of infidelity. But ever since, she has been acting upon the offensive ; and in this war of aggression upon the powers of darkness, she has been constantly enlarging the area of her operations, till there is scarcely any portion of the globe where her giant tread has not been heard, and her triumphs recorded.

Who can tell how much of this grand impulse is owing to the Sabbath school? Certain it is that upon the hardest fields of conflict, and amid the most glorious scenes of triumph, the banner of the Cross has been borne aloft by champions that were mailed and greaved for the conflict, in the Sunday school. Such were Morrison and Carey, Cox and Williams, and Harriet Newell, and a host of others—

“Immortal names that were not born to die.”

Such blessed fruits will the Sunday school still continue to produce till the final and glorious triumph of the cause of Christ. The young are the hope of the Church. They will be its future pillars when the strong men have bowed themselves, and the fathers have fallen on sleep. They are, by and by, to occupy the altar and the pulpit ; they are to give tone and character to the Church ; to push forward her efforts for the amelioration of man at home, and for the evangelization of the heathen abroad. To them it is left to say whether the Church shall continue to rise higher and still higher in the moral image of Christ, and to shine brighter and still brighter as the light

and glory of the world! Only let their infant hearts be imbued with the love of Christ; only let them be trained and nurtured in the Sabbath school, and the question is already settled.

Such, Sunday school teachers, is the breadth of your sublime mission! the grandeur and illimitable fruit of your glorious work! I hail you as fellow-laborers in the vineyard of our Lord! Your field is no restricted area: it is the world. Its waving harvests, even now, invite you to thrust in the sickle and reap. He that stands idly in the market-place, and says, "no man hath hired me," is deaf to the voice of his God, and traitorous to the cause of humanity!

But this work, glorious as it is, is only *just begun*. We have taken the bearings of a few headlands, surveyed a few bays and harbors, and marked a few indentations along the coast; but the great ocean of the Sunday school work yet lies before us all unexplored. In the eye of the Infinite God, the mission of the Sunday school comprehends nothing less—and in our eye, in all our plans and purposes, it ought to comprehend nothing less—than the reaching to, and encompassing within its blessed influences, the entire childhood of the race! As our mighty legions of freemen went forth to put down rebellion in *every part* of our National domain, so you go forth, soldiers of the living God, with light, and truth, and liberty upon your banners, to crush the black despotism of sin in all the earth. The Sunday school is the first-born daughter of the modern missionary enterprise. And with that enterprise shall it march forward.

sharing in her conflicts, kindling in her successes, and blazing forth amid the glories of her final and universal triumph.

Nor is the work insignificant in its details. Behold the sculptor, elaborating a statue to adorn some niche in the capital of his country! How patiently he toils! with what unwearied perseverance! Month after month, and year after year, does he continue to apply the gentle strokes of his chisel. Watch the progress of his work. Day after day does he devote himself to the development of a single feature or to the perfection of a single limb, with scarcely any perceptible change. But though no one of the uncounted blows that have been struck leaves any distinct trace behind, yet the grand aggregate—the final result—stands forth in the perfect statue, the sublime model of art—the masterpiece of a Praxiteles—exciting the wonder and admiration of the world!

Christian teacher! you too are erecting a statue! one that is not to be placed in some earthly and perishing building; but to fill some niche in the eternal temple of your God! Shall the sculptor excel you in skill, in patience, in zeal, or perseverance? His production shall grow old with years; it shall crumble and waste away; it shall perish and be forgotten. But yours shall endure forever! His impressions were made upon the cold, lifeless marble—yours upon immortal mind! That mind shall carry forward forever the impressions you are making upon it. The statue of the sculptor may stand in the cabinet of kings, and men of genius and art may behold and admire its beauty. Yours shall stand in

the cabinet of heaven—the monument of your workmanship—and the flaming eyes of angel and cherubim shall gaze upon it.

My friends, one immortal mind thus stamped with the eternal seal of goodness and greatness, would be an ample compensation for a lifetime of devotion. In the light of this sublime truth, I can see how it may be that the implanting of a noble thought, or a holy purpose in the heart of even a plebeian boy, may be an event of higher moment to humanity than the crowning of a king, or the founding of an empire.

It has been beautifully said that “a good book is a kind of ark, which will carry a man’s thoughts, sympathies, and soul over the flood of centuries to new generations of men.” Such a book may be destroyed; its leaves become torn and wasted; and its rich treasures lost forever. Before the Sunday school teacher God has placed a book, every leaf of which is of imperishable texture. Let him freight that little ark with pure thoughts, with holy sympathies, and with heavenly aspirations; and onward shall it bear its precious burden through all ages. The teacher may die in his work; no monument may tell where his ashes slumber; he may be forgotten by living men. But the immortal thoughts with which he has freighted a living spirit and sent it onward, will then, perhaps, be just expanding into their grandest results! And he—the humble, patient, persevering teacher—who only thought to guide the footsteps of a child in the road to heaven—is now filling up some of the grandest chapters in the

history of the world's redemption ! *Others* may bring the top-stone, amid the shoutings of triumph and the pæans of worldly applause ; but he who, with tears, and self-denial, and cross-bearings, laid the foundation-stone, shall be a participator of the joy, and a sharer of the immortal honor.

A vision of the Church of the future comes up before me. I see her robed in spotless purity, like a bride adorned for her husband. Grace and beauty are blended in her form. Her brow is mantled with intelligence ; her eye beams with the serene confidence of undying faith ; her mouth is filled with arguments, and her lips touched with living fire. Her heart throbs with deep and broad sympathies for the whole race ; her feet are shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace ; the coronal upon her head flames with light and glory ; and, above all, God is in the midst of her—her light, her joy, and her strength. She is making her triumphal march among the nations. The young and the old come out to bid her welcome. Kings have become her nursing fathers, and queens her nursing mothers ; the princes and nobles of the earth do her homage. Science lays its honors at her feet ; art and commerce become her ministering servants ; agriculture makes the earth bloom all along her pathway. She speaks, and the lightnings take up her message and carry it to the ends of the earth ; while the winds and the waves of the ocean are responsive to her call. Human hearts—crushed, bleeding, despairing, every-where—look up once more in hope, and hail her approach. Thou queen of beauty—daughter of the skies—bride

of the Lamb! Church of the living God! we hail thee, the precursor of the world's grand jubilee. In thy train shall be heard the triumphant acclamation, going up like the voice of many waters from every creature on earth and in heaven—“*Halleluiah! the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!*”

Thanks be to God! From our Pisgah summit we may survey the whole land of promise! Its length, and breadth, and beauty, break upon our unclouded vision! Nor do we behold it as a land afar off, and into which we are forbidden, as was Moses, to enter. It is nigh at hand. The advance of the great army is crossing now. I look along the vast lines of the serried host—Sunday school banners are gleaming in the sunlight—every-where! Sunday school melodies break upon the ear, the precursor of certain and glorious triumph. When the rebels evacuated Richmond, the power of the Confederacy was broken; its hope perished. So when Satan relinquished his grasp upon the childhood of the race, the last hope of his dominion was destroyed. My friends, “Our God is marching on!” we shall yet go up and possess the whole land.

Beloved Sunday school teachers! God has brought us up to a sublime elevation, from which we may behold, as our eye glances down through the ages, the coming triumphs of the Cross! It has been my aim to give you just views of the dignity and grandeur of your work; broader views of its scope and power, by showing that it is interblended with all the future of the Church. The very lineaments of character that Church shall wear, and the work it shall do, are,

under God, to be shaped and fashioned by the Sunday school.

I congratulate you upon the grandeur of your mission, and the magnitude of the results it infolds. May God raise up in all the Church officers and teachers equal to their responsibility and their work!

I congratulate you upon so novel, and yet so grand an idea as a Convention in which all our Sunday schools in this great State may be represented; and upon so noble a gathering of the intellect, and activity, and piety of the Church. May your councils be characterized by Christian and manly dignity; may they be marked by harmony and earnest piety! Here may you be able to devise wise and holy plans; and to develop broad and comprehensive views. Here may the flame of devotion to your holy work be kindled anew in your own hearts; that from this place you may carry the holy impulse into all the Sunday schools of the State. Then shall your Convention and your work form an era in the progress of Sunday schools, and be remembered with gratitude and thanksgiving in all coming time.

If I might be the mouthpiece of the highest office in the Church, I would say, your mission is enthroned in the heart of the Church, and we bid you Godspeed in whatever can enlarge and ennoble it. *Amen.*



## IX.

## THE PROBLEM OF LIFE.

A FUNERAL DISCOURSE, PREACHED ON THE OCCASION OF THE DEATH  
OF THE HON. JUDGE M'LEAN, OF THE SUPREME COURT  
OF THE UNITED STATES, IN WESLEY CHAPEL,  
CINCINNATI, APRIL 23, 1861.

*"Wherefore hast thou made all men in vain?"* Psalm lxxxix, 47.

FEW of my hearers who have read the history of the American Revolution will ever forget the touching incident connected with the burial of the gallant Gen. Fraser, of the British army. He was a member of Gen. Burgoyne's staff, and was mortally wounded by the American sharp-shooters, near Saratoga. When he was dying, he requested that he might be buried on the summit of the hill at the going down of the sun. Thither his brave comrades, in slow and long procession, carried him; and, though the enemy's shot—for the Americans were not apprised of the nature of the movement—were falling like hail-stones around them, there, with uncovered heads, reverently, they performed the last sad offices for the dead.

Not amid the thunder of cannon, nor the sulphurous smoke of battle, are we called to the services of this hour; but yet in the midst of startling devel-

opments of treason and rebellion, which have filled the whole country with excitement the most profound. But, if the warrior upon the battle-field will pause to render homage to the dead, though the leaden hail is falling thick and fast around him, it is fitting certainly, that we, here in this peaceful sanctuary, devote an hour to the memory of one who has deserved well of his country by patriotic and eminent service.

My text for the occasion will be found in the eighty-ninth Psalm, and a part of the forty-seventh verse: "Wherefore hast thou made all men in vain?"

The Hebrew melodies have ever been recognized as possessing a beauty unequaled by any uninspired compositions. Their elevation of thought and style, the boldness of their imagery, and the beauty of their diction captivate at once the intellect, the imagination, and the taste. But they also have a depth of sentiment, a strong, irresistible undercurrent of pathos, of feeling, that touches all the finer chords of sympathy in the heart, and subdues it to their will and purpose.

Among all these melodies, none fall upon the ear or strike into the heart with such power as those poured forth when the calamities of the nation and the woes of the people lent inspiration to the bard. Nothing can be more touching than the lamentation of the captive tribes as they sat down by the rivers of Babylon and wept—"hanging their harps upon the willows in the midst thereof." How strangely aggravated their sorrows, when they who had carried them away captive required of them a song, and

those that wasted them required of them mirth! No wonder that they exclaimed, "How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" and yet, strangely enough, like as the bruised flower sends forth the sweetest odor, there gushed from their bruised hearts, even while refusing to sing, a refrain, whose surpassing melody has thrilled the hearts of men in all ages.

In the land of their captivity, they thought upon their native home, its vine-clad hills, once teeming with joy and plenty, but now wasted and desolate. They thought of the city of David, their much-loved Jerusalem; of the Temple with its mysterious and solemn shekinah, the celestial fire that burned upon its altar. They thought of those peculiar and providential mercies, by which, as a nation, they had been distinguished above all other nations, and which had led even a heathen idolater to exclaim, "How goodly are thy tents, O Jerusalem, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!" But now, how changed the scene! Judah was laid waste and desolate; crushed and fallen were the walls and goodly palaces of the holy city; and even the Temple itself was desecrated by the tread of unhallowed feet. Their princes and nobles had been destroyed. The last of their kings had been subjected to cruelties the most diabolical, and the line of David, in which all the promises of God and the hopes of his people centered, seemed to have become extinct. Their national glory, in which they had so long prided themselves, seemed to have gone out in a night of blackness, upon which, as yet, no star of hope had been seen in the sky.

Such were the circumstances under which this psalm was indited. No wonder that, under the pressure of misfortune, of blasted hopes, and of untold woes such as these, the bard of Israel, with crushed and aching heart, despairing in his agony, every thing around him gloomy, dark, hopeless, should be brought to feel, for the moment at least, that life itself was illusory, and that he should cry out, "Wherefore hast thou made all men in vain?"

But this question is not alone with the Psalmist. It often will spring up in the deep undercurrent of feeling excited by a survey of the brevity and uncertainty of human life. Never do we feel its power more than when we stand in the presence of the dead. Death has ever been felt to be one of the solemn mysteries of life—an enigma, that, to the mere natural reason, renders the great problem of life difficult of solution.

Look at man. He enters upon life helpless and dependent; he increases in stature and strength; he acquires knowledge and power; but when he has just reached a point at which it would seem that all his faculties are to receive a freer play, and his influence to enter upon a wider field; when he has just reached the acme of his usefulness; when the world has just come to recognize his virtues, and listen reverently to the lessons of experience and wisdom imparted by him, death enters upon the scene. It breaks in upon the plans of life; it overclouds all its prospects, and destroys all its hopes. As the scene closes, as the heavy clods fall upon the coffin, and the grave hides from the eye the manly form,

leaving it to molder into dust and perish away, we start back ; we almost involuntarily exclaim, "*Is this all?*" We can not restrain the inquiry—it gushes spontaneously from the heart—"Is there to be no future ; are there no other ends to be accomplished in human life than those which relate to man's present troubled, uncertain, and brief existence?" If so, with the Psalmist we may well exclaim, "Wherefore hast thou made all men in vain?"

This, my friends, as fitting to the occasion and the solemn objects for which we are assembled, suggests the great PROBLEM OF LIFE for our solution.

I. Let us soberly and earnestly survey this problem. Let us not shrink from even a strong presentation of the facts which seem to give to life an enigmatical character, and raise the question whether it has been given for any wise or adequate ends.

Man is endowed with a body of marvelous workmanship. How wonderfully are its joints articulated and adapted to use ; how flexible and yet how strong his muscles ; how fine and delicate the net-work of nerve that pervades the system, and with what exquisite sensibility does it endow the whole ; how wonderful the organs of sense, those loop-holes through which the soul holds communion with the external world ! What shall we say of all this ? Has life no higher purpose than the development of this bodily organism ? Why, then, such exquisite workmanship for so ignoble an end ? Why are all the various and curious parts of the machinery brought together and blended with such nice precision, if the whole fabric must so soon be demolished and laid

aside with so little consideration? What response to these inquiries can that reason which ignores Revelation and man's higher destiny make? None—absolutely none! But when we come to look upon this body as the casket in which is enshrined an immortal nature, whose growth and development it is designed to promote; and still further, when we come to look upon it as symbolizing to mortal man the glorious resurrection body, we are compelled to feel that it possesses no refinement, nor beauty, nor perfection which is not warranted by the mission given it to fulfill.

Man is also endowed with sensibilities of exquisite delicacy and tenderness. They link him in fond affection to the loved circle of home, of kindred, and friends. What yearning for the presence of loved ones and for intercourse with them; what painful apprehensions awakened by their absence, and what an instinctive craving of our nature that these tender, glorious affections may not die! How mysterious, then, that just when they are ripening in their strength and expanding in their beauty, Death lays upon them his icy hand, and their warm pulsations cease forever! If this is all, if there is no future state, the purity of whose love is but faintly typified by the purest and most ennobling affection of earth; no future state, in which these exalted affections are to receive their full development, and to be studded with the coronal of immortality, the endowment of the human race with them, and the high expectations they awaken, seem to be but cold, chilling mockery.

To the same conclusions are we forced, if we

consider the intellectual nature of man. To the progressive capacity of that intellect no boundaries of limitation have been set. So also the universe of God, which is to be the grand theater of its activity, and which is so wonderfully adapted to call forth that activity, is equally limitless. But here is the enigma of reason. Just as the intellect begins to develop its energies—just as it enters upon the exploration of the works of the Creator—death comes and closes the scene. Now, if there is no future state in which those faculties may expand to their full maturity; if the vast ocean of truth is never to be surveyed; if the unfathomed mines of knowledge are never to be explored, why has God endowed man with such transcendent powers and spread before him such a glorious field for their exercise? why, if he is to be cut down, nipped and blighted, in the first dawn of his being? Under such circumstances, who can wonder if, unable to solve the great problem of life, the soul turns despairingly to God and cries out, “Wherefore hast thou made all men in vain?” But, thanks be to God! a brighter light than the faint glimmerings of philosophy dawns upon us. Far through the dark mists of futurity it sends its heaven-born radiance, and shines with undimmed luster through the long, long perspective of eternity “Life and immortality are brought to light in the Gospel.” The solution of life’s great mystery, then, is found in the fact that this is not man’s real, but embryo, life.

“This is the bud of being, the dim dawn,  
The twilight of our day, the vestibule.

Life's theater as yet is shut, and death,  
Strong death, alone can heave the massy bar;  
This gross impediment of clay remove,  
And make us, embryos of existence, free."

II. But we must not pass over the solutions which human reason has attempted of this great problem. There must be some theory of life. Every thinking mind feels and acknowledges that. Why have I been created; for what purpose; and what are the ends to be accomplished by my existence? Attempt the solution on the grounds of mere human reason, that reason which fails to recognize this life as only preparatory to another—attempt it on such grounds, and you can not advance a single step in your solution without coming in direct conflict with the sturdy facts of human experience.

One attempts to solve the problem of human life upon the theory that the object of existence is happiness.

"O, happiness, our being's end and aim"—

comprises the alpha and the omega of his creed. With him, to accumulate wealth, to acquire knowledge, to rise in power and influence, these are the great ends of life. This theory not only rests upon a false basis, but it fails of its end. Take the most favorable case; the man who has lived long, been successful in life, acquired riches and honor, and is now filled with worldly pleasures—possessing all that heart could wish. If his riches could purchase life, or bribe the grim monster to forego his work; if his worldly pleasures could perpetually rejuvenate his bodily system, and free it from the infirmities of age;



if his marble palace could bar its doors and shut out disease ; if these worldly pleasures could be perpetually enjoyed without cloying the appetite and filling the mind with aversion and disgust ; and, in fine, if these blessings could be secured to all the race, and enjoyed forever—then might we imagine that mere human reason had indeed succeeded in solving the mystery of life ; and we might also begin to sing of happiness as “our being’s end and aim.” But, alas ! the first breath of disease, the first cloying of appetite, the first blast of misfortune that carries away our worldly riches, causes the beautiful theory to totter and tremble ; but when sturdy death comes—even though it be at life’s longest limit—the beautiful fabric of human ingenuity disappears forever ; and there comes back upon us the irresistible conviction that the problem of life is yet unsolved.

Such is the result of this theory when applied to the most favorable case. There are other cases by which it must also be tested. What shall we say of those who die in infancy ? They have *failed of the happiness* of this life ; but must we therefore infer that they have failed altogether of the objects of human existence ? Nay, it can not be unless all nature is a lie. Yet this theory of human happiness as the end of life leaves us with no other alternative with regard to our departed little ones ; but, thanks be to God ! there comes to me a voice of deeper wisdom and of higher authority than any merely human, bringing assurance “that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.”

Test this theory by another application. What multitudes there are, with whom life is one long struggle for happiness; and that struggle, without any fault of their own, and without any possibility of its being otherwise, is all in vain. They are depressed by poverty, shut up to want; their inheritance is bodily disease and pain; the aliment of knowledge is denied; disappointment and misfortune fall upon their every pathway in life. How utterly unable is this theory to solve the mystery of these seeming contradictions, these anomalies, these apparent abortions of human life! Alas, how many of the despairing sons and daughters of misfortune and wretchedness may look up to heaven and exclaim with agonizing hearts, "If in this life only we have hope, we are of all men most miserable." What can this theory do for such; what pang of disappointment and sorrow can it allay; what promise to cheer and comfort can it make; what assurance to hope can it inspire? Nothing, my brethren, can more thoroughly demonstrate the insufficiency of all these merely-human attempts at the solution of the great problem of life, than such applications as these.

There is another theory for the solution of this problem, ingeniously put, and whose sophistry not unfrequently imposes itself upon even thinking minds. Look, says one; behold how careful nature is of the *race*, the *species*, but how careless of the *individuals* that compose it! Individuals are constantly dying, dropping away—in all stages of being from the first dawn of life to its latest hour; but the *race* survives, keeps on, and even improves. This is certainly put

in a most ingenious and seductive form. It seems to lift us up from the minutiae of little things, to broad and grand views. But tell me, how can nature care for the race without caring for the individuals that go into and make up that race? Can a father love his family as a whole, and strive to elevate and improve them as an aggregate, a family—while yet he is indifferent to them as individuals? Who does not know that society is happy only as the individuals that compose that society are happy? Pain, misfortune, distress fall not upon a *race*, but upon *individuals*. So it is with good; it comes to the race only through the individual. Every individual elevated, endowed with happiness, contributes so much toward the elevation of the race; and a race can be elevated only by the elevation of the individuals which compose it. Individuality, after all, is the primal law of God and nature; the mainspring of mighty forces. Nature could not preserve the identity and continuance of a single species, except by continuing to stamp the individuals of that species with all its distinguishing characteristics. The great apostasy of man from God had its origin in an individual; for “by one man sin entered into the world.” So also with the second Adam; he took his place as *an individual of the race*, and hence it is said that “by the righteousness of ONE the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.”

This theory, then, which sinks the individual in the race, is clearly at war with all the analogies of nature, is contradicted by the experience of man, and condemned by the revelations of nature as well as

revealed religion. But even if it were not, tell me, O ye vain philosophers! how is individual suffering, of which the world is full; how is the death of the individuals of the race, often in childhood, in youth, or in early manhood; tell me, how is all this to elevate the race? Nay, such an assumption is but the mockery of all reason, as well as religion. Thus, with invincible force, does the conviction come back upon us, that, if Nature is indifferent to the fate of the individuals that compose a race, she can not be otherwise than indifferent to the race itself.

III. But admitting that the present life is only preparatory to a future and immortal life, it only remains for us to remove the objections urged against it as being adapted to that great end.

The objector will interpose that death is not essential to a probationary state. This we may readily admit. What would have been the earthly condition of man had he not sinned and incurred the penalty of death, it is impossible to say. Possibly he might have been favored with continued existence and happiness on earth. The tree of life to which he had access, was at once the pledge of permanent being and happiness, and also a means of securing them. The fruit of this tree would have healed or averted every evil to which our physical nature might have been subject, and preserved life through the longest periods of duration, had not our iniquities barred us from its approach and girt it around with sleepless "cherubim and the flaming sword," as an eternal guard "to keep the way of the tree of life."

Or, again, there is nothing inconsistent in the

supposition that man might have enjoyed a long life here ; and after a long series of years, when the faculties of both body and mind had acquired earthly maturity, by some easy and glorious transition, he might have been transferred to a holier clime, to pass through higher scenes of bliss, in his endless progression toward infinite perfection and happiness. How easy might have been the change ! how glorious the transition ! What unspeakable felicities would have enraptured the soul, as every successive change brought it into nearer progression to the infinite Fountain of goodness and love ! But when just created—when just planted in the garden, with the broad seal of immortality upon his brow, and with the clearest indications of his Creator's goodness around him, it was then that rebellion dire

“Brought death into the world, and all our woe.”

It was then that the glories of Eden faded from his vision, and the dark cloud of sorrow and death passed over all his prospects. For, “as by one man sin entered into the world, and DEATH *by sin* ; so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”

This consideration is sufficient to *silence* the questioner, showing that there is a natural and adequate cause for our race becoming subject to death. But this is not all. Death has a mission of life as well as of death. In this state of being where sin has spread abroad its ravages, it is utterly impossible for man to arrive at the full perfection of his being. The most philosophical of all our poets, amid the sadness and sorrow of bereavement, caught some

glorious visions of the relations of the present to the future life. They were such as ennobled his very sorrow and tinged it with the bright radiance of immortal faith :

“ Life makes the soul dependent on the dust,  
 Death gives her wings to mount above the spheres.  
 Through chinks, styled organs, dim life peeps at light ;  
 Death bursts the involving cloud and all is day :  
 All eye, all ear, the disembodied power.  
 Death has feigned evils nature shall not feel ;  
 Life ills substantial wisdom can not shun.  
 Death but entombs the body, life the soul.”

We can not wonder that one who had such exalted views of our relations to another state of being, should also have just and accurate views of the mission of death.

“ Death is the crown of life !  
 Were death denied, poor man would live in vain :  
 Were death denied, to live would not be life :  
 Were death denied, e'en fools would wish to die.  
 Death wounds to cure ; we fall, we rise, we reign !  
 Spring from our fetters, fasten in the skies,  
 Where blooming Eden withers in our sight.  
 Death gives us more than was in Eden lost :  
 This king of terrors is the Prince of Peace.”

Grant me but the existence of this spiritual nature, this immortal, thinking principle ; allow me the light which Revelation casts upon our connection with eternity, and our relations to a spiritual and deathless existence, and I ask no more that I may be able to vindicate the ways of God to man.

But, we are asked, why is life so short, if the solution of its great problem is found in the fact that it is a probationary, preparatory state ? Ought not a

life, involving such tremendous issues, to have been more protracted, that there might have been longer time, further opportunities, and consequently a higher probability of securing the great ends of its probation?

This brings us directly to the question whether the present life, with its limitations and uncertainties, is not the best possible arrangement to accomplish the ends of a probationary state?

In the first place, observe that the character is really formed in early life. The habits, tastes, passions, predominating tendencies formed in childhood grow stronger with our growth, and become so confirmed, even in early manhood, that they rarely undergo any material transformation afterward. The only change, usually and in the ordinary course of things, observed in them is an ever-increasing tendency to fixedness. Long before man reaches his threescore years and ten, this fixedness of character, in most instances, has become established. The man is no longer inclined, or even able, to enter upon new modes of thought, or into new departments of business. Nor is he capable, to any great degree, of receiving new impressions. When a man has reached that age, you expect him to live on just as he is to his dying day, and to go down into the grave with very much the same character he then possesses. This great fact in the mental history of our race has important relations to the great end of life—the salvation of the soul. The very law of our mental constitution which unfits us for new emotions, new trains of thought, or new departments of business, operates against our becoming religious late in life, when in

earlier years religion has been neglected by us. This conclusion of philosophy is also attested by the facts of experience. Nearly all who are ever converted are converted in early life, or at least the foundations of their religious characters are then laid. Many a sinner has virtually decided his destiny long before he has reached his threescore and ten ; and could he live a thousand years longer, what would it avail? You need expect no change in him. His character is fixed. Thenceforward he will live only to "fill up the measure of his iniquities, and heap up wrath against the day of wrath." To all intents and purposes, though he yet walks the earth, he is a damned spirit. We are forced thus to the conclusion that so far as the personal ends of probation are concerned—the salvation of the soul—the threescore years and ten of human life are long enough, and any addition to them in the aggregate would not conduce one iota to the great ends of human probation.

But look again ; if no good would come to the sinner, so far as his personal salvation is concerned, by protracting his life, to the world it would be an unmitigated and unmeasured evil. Think of a bloody Nero living on—his thirst for blood and his means of gratifying that thirst augmenting with the slow march of the centuries! Think of Napoleon, whose restless ambition—unhushed by any slumber of the grave—should distract the nations and desolate empires by the unceasing alternations of conquest and defeat! Think of a Thomas Paine defying death, and living on to spread abroad through successive generations without end the pestiferous influence of



his living presence! or a Voltaire through a thousand generations plying his fiendish work of sapping the foundations of the faith of man in God! Think of shrewd and grasping men, expanding their commercial enterprise, till their ledgers should not only comprise whole navies and cities, but also the souls and bodies of men! What limit could be set to the hoardings of avarice? Bloated intemperance, more haggard and repulsive as the ages passed by, would experience the intensified gnawings of its infernal appetite, and by its very presence render most foul and corrupting the moral atmosphere of our world! Then think, too, of those who now look to the grave as their only refuge from the shame of tarnished honor or sullied virtue! make man immortal upon the earth and you take away their last refuge. Think of those who, with all the consciousness of wrong, would be doomed to wear the manacles of oppression forever—toiling to pamper the luxury and foster the ever-growing pride and superciliousness of lordly masters—with no hope of deliverance from the friendly hand of Death! Such would be some of the fearful results of indefinitely protracting life, or of making it immortal upon the earth. It would convert our world into a pandemonium, more fearful than hell itself, because it would be not merely evil in torment with evil, but *evil* destroying *all good*.

But in this connection, another objection is urged. It is based upon the uncertainty of life. In the inspired language of the man of Uz, death is described as “the land of the shadow of death without any order, and where the light is as darkness.” Truly

there is no order in the visitation of death. It puts utterly at defiance all the calculations of wisdom. Without order, without discrimination, without provision for the future or remedy for the past, the children of men go down to the grave. The old and the young—the infant of a day and the man of hoary age; the good and the bad; the most useless and the most needed alike die.

“Leaves have their time to fall,  
And flowers to wither at the north wind’s breath,  
And stars to set—but all,  
Thou hast all seasons for thine own, O Death !”

But is there no design in all this; no wise and beneficent purpose to be accomplished? Is it not an essential element in working out the great problem of life? We must not forget that there is a moral power in death, which all men are compelled to feel, whether they will acknowledge it or not. It is “a preacher of righteousness” in the earth. It has some agency in all the moral and spiritual good that comes to our race. The very thought of it, which will come unbidden to the soul by day and by night, arrests the man of wicked purposes; makes the worldling feel that all his hoarded riches are empty and vain, and causes the lover of pleasure to look down into the dark and silent grave and grow thoughtful as he holds converse with the dead.

Now, suppose the young were exempt from death; in their pleasures how powerful the motive to forget God! and thus the forming period of life would be passed, and the soul be launched out upon the voyage of life with no direction heavenward. Suppose

the middle-aged were exempt; in their struggle for riches, for honor, for power, God, and the soul, and eternity would be neglected and forgotten. And thus man would come down to old age—to the period when the grasshopper becomes a burden and desire fails—with all his habits fixed and confirmed, and all averse to God; his conscience has become seared, his spiritual perceptions all blunted, and his moral powers all enfeebled. As well may you hope for the leopard to change his spots as for that man to change his character.

This ever-present conviction that our children and our friends are constantly exposed to death and hell is a most powerful stimulus to Christian effort for their salvation. Nay, even the Christian himself would not be safe were he permitted to enjoy this immunity from death. We are so prone to look upon religion merely in the light of a preparation for death, that were not death always at hand, always hovering around us, yet concealing the hour of his appearance, we should be imperiled in our spiritual condition by any such immunity. Hence it is that there is a voice coming up from the grave of smiling infancy nipped in the early bud; coming up from the grave of youth whose cup of early joy was mingled with the bitterness of death; coming up from the mausoleum of the man of might and power, who died while yet the maturity of his strength was in him; coming up from all around us and at every hour, and with thrilling tones warning us that there is no device, nor work, nor wisdom in the grave ever yawning to receive us. Did the old only die, the

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moral effect of death would be lost to the race. We should look upon it with quiet unconcern as a simple fulfillment of nature's laws. Thus it seems necessary that death should seek its victims from every age and from all ranks and conditions in life, that men may be brought to comprehend the imperative demand made upon them for unceasing watchfulness and labor to work out the great mission of human life. Painful, then, as is this uncertainty of life, we thank Heaven for its allotment. Nothing short of so terrible a monitor, on our right hand and on our left, before and behind, at our side always, would be sufficient to rouse the soul from its lethargy, and break the almost omnipotent spell which binds it fast in the thralldom of sin and death.

Finally, in this solution of the problem of life, we remark that life, though short, is long enough for the Christian. There is no reason why he should live forever in this world of sin and death. Both his mental and moral capabilities shall be improved by the change. Does he go from the fellowship of companions and fellow-pilgrims with whom he has journeyed in the way, nobler companionship shall greet him on the other shore. Does he go from scenes of earthly beauty and happiness, more exalted beauties shall ravish his vision as his eyes open upon the sublime scenes of the New Jerusalem; and higher bliss than was ever comprehended in the most exalted conceptions of human thought or imagination shall thrill all his nature with a new and wondrous rapture. Brief is the time, indeed, allotted to the Christian as his period of privilege; but shall we

complain that it is too short, if at the end we may receive the honors of a graduation to the goodly company that have preceded him, and are now faultless before the throne of God? Nay, if in this short time the work may be accomplished, a longer period would have been a waste, a useless blank in the lifetime of an immortal being. But when we look upon this world only as the nursery of the next, can we wonder that the thriving scion should be transplanted to a more genial soil, where it may spread abroad its branches and bear its fruit forever? Death, my friends, is but the transplanting of the soul, and heaven is the soil where it may live and flourish forever. It matters not, then, when or where the good man falls.

“Death can not come  
To him untimely, who is fit to die;  
The less of this cold world, the more of heaven;  
The briefer life, the earlier immortality.”

IV We come now to apply these thoughts to one who nobly wrought out the great problem of life, and has so recently entered the last figure in the grand summation, and laid the whole before the Judge of all the earth. Never are human virtues fully enshrined till death sets its seal upon them, and stamps them with immortality.

The HON. JOHN M'LEAN, LL. D., Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, was born in Morris county, New Jersey, March 11, 1785. His father, who was a farmer, was a man of industry and integrity, but possessing little of this world's goods. Four years after the birth of John he

emigrated with his large family to the West, first settling at Morgantown, in Western Virginia; afterward removing to Nicholasville, Kentucky, and finally, in 1799, settling in what is now Warren county, Ohio, where he cleared a farm, on which he resided till his death, which occurred about forty years later.

The subject of the present memoir, at the age of eighteen, resolved upon entering the legal profession. Coming to Cincinnati he pursued his studies under the direction of Arthur St. Clair, one of the most eminent counselors of the West, at the same time supporting himself by writing in the office of the Clerk of Hamilton county. He was an ardent and close student, devoting most of the night, as well as the day, to the acquisition of knowledge. Not satisfied with pursuing the mere routine course of professional study, his reading took a wide range, for that day especially, when books and educational facilities were scarce. It comprised almost every department of science, history, and literature, as well as law. At this period he was laying the foundation upon which so noble and symmetrical an edifice was to be reared in later years.

In 1807 he was admitted to the bar and opened an office in Lebanon, the present seat of Warren county. Here he pursued the even tenor of his way some five years, rapidly extending his acquaintance and winning the esteem and confidence of all who knew him. Industry, method, faithfulness, and a high order of practicable ability, combined with great suavity of manner, were elements that could not and

can not fail of success in any man. From this time, also, another controlling element entered into his character. Through the instrumentality of that eminent minister of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Rev. John Collins, he was brought from a state of skeptical doubt and unbelief into the enjoyment of the clear sunlight of the truth and faith of the Gospel. He at once identified himself with the Methodist Episcopal Church, in which communion he continued till his death. Henceforth Christianity was not, with him, a mere matter of form, a garb, a profession ; it was a vital element in his character, enthroning conscience in its rightful supremacy, and exerting a controlling influence over his whole life. Happy the young man—and especially the professional young man—who thus, at the very commencement of his career, enthrones God in his heart, and enters upon life with those lofty aims and purposes inspired by the religion of Christ. This is but the recognition of life's grandest aim ; the mighty result of its great problem ; and it is not too much to say that through his long experience to the closing scene of his life, it never failed to be regarded as such by Judge M'Lean. Nor can it be at all doubtful that the recognition of this principle in his character was one of the causes of his great success in professional life—one of the causes of that unbounded confidence the American people have ever reposed in his moral integrity.

So well and so favorably had Mr. M'Lean become known, that in 1812 he was elected member of Congress by an overwhelming majority ; and in 1814 he

was reëlected to the same office, having received every vote cast in his district.

The first years of his service in our National Congress were years of conflict in our "second war for independence." He recognized the fact that true National allegiance bound him to support, with heart and soul, without proviso, and without mental reservation, the National Government as constitutionally organized. To every measure necessary to sustain that Government and maintain the honor of our National Flag and the glory of our commonwealth, he gave the unflinching support of a true patriot. The base *IFS*—the provisos, and conditions of remaining in faithful allegiance, which spring only from traitor *hearts*, are separated by such infinitesimal lines from *treason itself*, that he regarded them with infinite scorn. Just as the drama of our *third*, and perhaps grandest struggle for nationality and for the holy principle of self-government was opened, the noble patriot of half a century, having deserved well of his country, sunk into the unwaking slumber of the grave. Had the pealing thunders of rampant treason and rebellion that boomed over the Alleghanies and woke to life, as with an electric shock, the martial spirit of the great, and glorious, and free North-West—had they but penetrated the cold ear of death, and summoned him forth as he stood in the heyday of his manhood, no voice would have uttered nobler sentiments of patriotism, and no heart beat with a purer or holier love of country.

Mr. M'Lean terminated his Congressional services in 1816. Though then but thirty-one years of age,



he had been elected by the unanimous vote of the Legislature of Ohio a Judge of the Supreme Court of the State. This office he held till 1822, when he was appointed by President Monroe Commissioner of the General Land-Office at Washington. A year later he was appointed Postmaster-General, which office he occupied through the administration of Adams into that of Jackson, till 1829. In this department he rendered eminent service to the country; he brought order out of confusion; he evoked system, and energy, and honesty, and diffused them through all the multitudinous ramifications of the department. The whole country was too greatly benefited by his services not to appreciate their value, and henceforth his reputation had gone forth beyond the boundaries of his own State. It had become national.

When General Jackson was about to organize his Cabinet, in 1828, the Navy and the War Departments were both successively tendered him, but both declined. The year following, he was appointed Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, which office he continued to fill with honor to himself and usefulness to his country till his death. He first took his seat upon the bench in January, 1830, and continued with unvarying regularity to discharge the responsible duties of his office till the last adjournment of the Court, March 14, 1861—making *thirty-one years* of arduous service in the highest judicial tribunal of the nation. This appointment he received, not as a political partisan, but on account of eminent fitness. Had that rule

of action always been adhered to, in making the appointments committed to the hands of the Chief Magistrate of these United States, the great interests of the country would never have been brought into peril by the machinations of traitors occupying the chief posts of the nation—traitors, mean enough not only to hold office and take their pay from the Government while all their official energies were employed by stealth to undermine the very foundations of that Government, but also to violate the most sacred of all oaths, and thus strike a fearful blow at the only foundation upon which man can put faith in his fellow-man.

The character of Judge M'Lean as a jurist, the value of his decisions, the manner in which they were enunciated, and the ability with which they were presented, it is fitting I should leave to the judgment of the legal profession and to the discussions of the reviewer. But there is one point affecting the character of all these decisions pertinent to this occasion, and which I can not consent to pass over. We speak not at random, but upon the testimony of one who had been associated with him a quarter of a century in professional life. His constant and laborious effort in all cases ever was to decide righteously; to ascertain the truth, and without fear, favor, or affection, "give righteous judgment." While he honored the law, and would sternly enforce its behests, he was repugnant to technical exceptions calculated to defeat or protract the rendition of justice.

Another—Judge Wilkins, of Detroit—bears testimony that, never did a defeated suitor or counsel

leave his Court with a suspicion rankling within him, that injustice had been done him by Judge M'Lean, or that the law had, in his case, been perverted. Another—Hon. J. M. Howard—who had known him long and well, says, “Never have I seen the scales of justice held with a firmer hand.” His Court was a model of dignity and courtesy. The bickerings and scenes that usually stir men never had that effect upon him. The great secret of all this, says another—Judge Storer—was, that he did not abide in the strength of his intellect, in his power or genius, but he felt as a magistrate below—he was responsible to Him who is King above. The great secret of his success was in that he kept constantly before him and in his heart the conviction, that he was acting and judging under the eye of God.

We said that it would be out of place here to attempt any critical analysis of his judicial decisions, or any extended estimate of their character and value. But it would be equally improper for me to pass by without notice one of his efforts as a jurist—perhaps the greatest of his life, when we take into account its bearings upon the social and civil institutions of the land. We refer to the “Dred Scott Decision.” When the Supreme Court of the United States, at the bidding of a power which now demands the disintegration of our whole National fabric, so far departed from its dignity and equipoise—and from the line of all safe precedents—as to go outside of and beyond the case submitted to them, breaking down all those compromises that had been made to check the inundating tide of slavery, and, by a political

construction, giving to this repugnant institution vested rights, under the Constitution of the United States, in all the Territories, if not in all the States, of this great Republic; it was then that Judge M'Lean sent forth a dissent, or, perhaps, I may call it a judicial appeal, which must be regarded as the crowning act of his life. Overwhelming in fact, invincible in argument, replete in judicial lore, it leaves nothing further to be desired in vindication of the Constitution and laws of the land. It is not too much to say that the dissenting opinions of Judges M'Lean and Curtis on this occasion went very far toward rescuing the Supreme Court of the land from much of the popular odium that would otherwise have fallen upon it. No man possessed sounder constitutional views, or labored with greater sincerity and earnestness to impress such views upon the leading minds of the nation. He was for preserving the Union, not by compromising the principles upon which it was founded, but by giving to those principles their true and just development. This, of course, not unfrequently brought him into conflict with men of extreme views; but the calm reliance of his own mind upon truth and justice never forsook him.

He was a man of great benevolence of character. We mean benevolence in its broadest, its generic sense. This led him to be tender of the reputation of others, especially of his professional associates. His benevolence of character was manifested in his paternal tenderness toward the rising young men of the legal profession that appeared in his court. Far

removed was that tenderness from the supercilious patronizing which offends self-respect and awakens contempt. It was the tenderness of fatherly love, honorable in him who bestowed, and elevating to him that received it. His benevolence, too, extended to the purse; and it is the testimony of one—Judge Johnston—who knew him well, that “he literally exhausted his income in acts of charity, known only to his God and himself.”

The unsullied Christian character of Judge M’Lean, after all, is the grandest feature of that noble man. All else may be forgotten—his dignity and urbanity as a judge, his learning and wisdom as a statesman, nay, his very patriotism; but so long as Christian virtues continue to be held in esteem among men, so long will the name of John M’Lean shine forth resplendent as illustrating the purest and noblest type of Christian faith and life in connection with the most exalted station in human society. He was jealous of the honor of the Christian name; nor did he ever forget, even amid the fascinations of social or public life, that by character and act, if not by word, he was called to be a witness for Christ. He was faithful in the least as well as the greatest of his Christian duties. In the closet, at the family altar, and in the class-room, as well as in the more public services of the sanctuary, he obtained the spiritual nutriment which gave robustness to his Christian character. To the merely-formal professor he could say, “I have meat to eat ye know not of.” When the Christian character and virtues are so rarely illustrated in public life, well may we mourn the loss

of the Christian statesman, whose official integrity was a living rebuke to all who use office only as a means of emolument or power; the eminent judge, the purity of whose ermine was surpassed only by the spotlessness of his Christian life; the unselfish patriot, whose devotion to his country was surpassed only by his fealty to Christ, and whose life and character will ever be pointed to as the means of inspiring the young men of our country with the conviction that there are nobler ends to be attained, even in this life, than the sordid gains of office, or the selfishness of human ambition.

I come not to-day to utter words of eulogy; yet it is not too much to say that, through the long period of his public life—extending over nearly half a century—his character, as a public officer, as a man, and as a Christian, has stood out before the world untarnished—nay, I may say, unsuspected. With equal honesty and ability has he met and fulfilled every trust. The loss of such a man at such a juncture is a public calamity. When humanity, with mighty throes, is yearning for a higher development, and for the realization of a nobler destiny, well may we mourn the death of one whose own character was a living embodiment of whatever is noble in man, and whose influence was wide and powerful to benefit the race. As fellow-citizens, well may we mourn the death of one whose history linked us to the heroic age of the Republic, the purity of whose patriotism had been thoroughly tested, and whose very name was a talismanic charm for the preservation of the Union, and of the constitutional rights

and liberties of our whole country, and of all our citizens, the lowest as well as the highest.

In person Judge M'Lean was tall and commanding. He was full six feet in height, and his frame was well proportioned. His countenance was expressive of a high order of intellectuality and great benevolence of character; his lip gave unmistakable indication of great firmness and decision. He would be a marked man any where, so noble in his appearance, so dignified, and yet so simple in his bearing. As a counselor, he was dispassionate, just, and faithful; and as a friend, steadfast and honorable. In a word, he combined in his character all the elements of a noble, Christian manhood.

Born two years before the birth of the American Constitution, which consolidated our whole country into one great nation, he lived to die under the gloomy anticipation of its approaching dissolution. God grant that apprehension may never be realized! Seer-like, he foresaw the coming storm which is now expending its terrific force upon the great temple of freedom erected and consecrated by our fathers. He saw the danger did not spring from any defect in that glorious instrument of our organization—the American Constitution—but in the sad decay of public virtue and national morals. Danger from the other cause might be remedied by amendment to the Constitution; but for the latter he saw no help, and, turning sadly away, he said, “*All is lost unless God will save us from the corruption and madness of the present time.*” By this conviction, together with the excitements of Washington, and the incessant

pressure of official influence to further individual aspirings for station, his health fairly broke down, and the minds of his friends became filled with alarm for his safety. With considerable effort, he reached his home near Cincinnati. Our Heavenly Father prepares his chosen ones for their departure, and there is not wanting evidence that all this time Judge M'Lean was ripening for his better life. A thousand little suggestions, words of advice, and expressions of tenderness also indicated that he was anticipating the speedy coming of the day of death.

Still his death was sudden. Only two days before his departure he rode into the city, and seemed not only to enjoy the ride, but to be refreshed by it. The next day his disease developed itself in great severity. During his sufferings he was much in prayer; his soul seemed to be going out after God—the living God, in whom he had so long trusted. Again he rallied and gave promise of recovery. But it was only a delusive promise. Relapse soon followed, then a sinking into unconsciousness, and that unconsciousness deepened into the dread slumber that knows no waking till the resurrection morn.

Judge M'Lean is now numbered with the illustrious dead. Most of his early associates in the public service had already preceded him to that "country from whose bourne no traveler returns." Madison and Monroe have long been numbered with the dead. Jay, and Kent, and Story, and Spencer, and Shaw have passed away, leaving behind them monuments of legal erudition which can never perish. Marshall, too, whose mighty intellect towered in



majesty and strength, bringing the willing homage of the great and good of the land; John Quincy Adams, the able statesman and the invincible patriot; Andrew Jackson, the man of iron nerve, whose most brilliant victory on the battle-field is eclipsed by the splendor of that glorious sentiment—"The Union, it must and shall be preserved;" and Webster, the great advocate, whose eloquence stripped error of its disguises, and lent even to truth an additional charm; and Henry Clay—Kentucky's great son—whose every heart-throb was true to his country, and to whom is awarded the immortal honor of preferring to do right rather than to be President of the United States; these and others now form the stately galaxy of our national sky. In that galaxy another star has been placed; and there in undimmed brightness shall it shine forever.

A noble form, fellow-citizens, that has moved among us and commanded our esteem and our honor, will be seen no more. As he passed along the streets the young looked up to him with admiration and wonder, and hoary locks bowed to do him reverence. But he will walk our streets no more; the judicial assemblies that have been graced by his presence will witness that presence no more. He has gone where another than he shall sit as judge supreme. We shall see him no more in our solemn assemblages. He will mingle no more with the sons of God on earth, in these houses made with hands, for he has gone up to a nobler and a better sanctuary, and joined that company of the redeemed that worship before the throne of God. Less than

sixteen years ago, when dedicating that beautiful cemetery, where his ashes now slumber, he said, "In a short time I, too, must become a co-tenant of this domain, and visitors will look upon my grave as I now look upon the graves of others." That prophecy is now fulfilled. In that same address he added, "But we look for a better inheritance. The Savior has sanctified the grave and broken its chains." Illustrious man! ennobled by virtue and enriched by faith, the consummation of thy hope has been reached, the problem of thy destiny is solved, and thou art "forever with the Lord."

## X.

## THE UNCERTAINTY OF LIFE JUSTIFIED.

A FUNERAL DISCOURSE, PREACHED ON THE OCCASION OF THE DEATH  
OF HON. T. H. WHETSTONE, A MEMBER OF THE OHIO STATE  
SENATE, AT MT. WASHINGTON, FEB. 12, 1865.

*"For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away."* James iv, 14.

DEATH is no new thing in our earth. For nearly six thousand years the successive generations of men, like successive waves of the ocean, have been appearing and then passing away. The number of the dead is uncounted. Their ashes mingle in the dust of every clime under heaven. Were they, by some trumpet-blast, called back to life, how would the very dust beneath our feet be made to quiver with motion! how populous would our earth become! what strange and unknown men would stand around us every-where!

But death is not a thing of the past. Its ravages are still going on; its victims are still being multiplied. The shafts of the unerring archer commissioned with the work of death, are falling into our very midst, evermore; relentlessly striking down the loved ones of our firesides and our homes. No plea, no prayer can stay the hand of the destroyer. No

budding promise of brilliant prospects and hopes; no endowment of princely talents for usefulness and honor; and no despairing outcry of hearts wrung with agony, can for a single moment avert the fatal blow! It comes alike to all. The purest and the best, the most loved and the most needed—are called away. Nay, how often are youth, and beauty, and health stricken down, while age and feebleness continue to live on even when the day of their usefulness is passed, and life has become a burden alike to themselves and their friends! How often do we see the man of noble gifts cut off—just as those gifts were being developed for usefulness; just as the community were coming to realize his worth and do homage to his virtues, and ere yet he had gained the high zenith of his power. But another, groveling in all his feelings and purposes, corrupt in himself and corrupting in all his influence, continues to live; he escapes perils by which others are cut off; he rises to health from diseases which carry others down to the grave; and thus he goes on to old age, blighting and cursing to the very close of life. O, what strange incongruities and apparent contradictions there are in this dying world! How they perplex and disquiet the soul that looks only upon their outward aspect—without comprehending their deep and hidden significance!

But what is the obvious lesson of these momentous facts? what are they designed to teach? Obviously, their first great lesson is *the uncertainty of life*. They proclaim that no age and no condition are exempt—no, not for a single hour—from the liability

of death. They teach us that smiling infancy, youth in its beauty, and manhood in its strength, are all liable—every moment—to die.

“For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.”

Never, perhaps, do these great questions connected with *life's uncertainty*, and the perplexities they involve, press upon us with so much force as when we are awakened to them by some great, overwhelming calamity; some great domestic and public loss, like that which to-day fills our hearts with sadness, and has summoned us to the house of mourning. It will be our purpose, then, in response to this deep and solemn feeling that presses upon us—this questioning of the wisdom and the goodness, as well as the need of the Divine plan that allows events to all human appearance so untoward, and death so untimely; in response to this feeling that must rise in every mind, we propose, as the main theme of our discourse—A JUSTIFICATION OF LIFE'S UNCERTAINTY.

1. But, first of all, let us observe that this uncertainty cuts no one off from the opportunity of salvation; still affords to every one the opportunity of accomplishing life's great end.

Some are cut off in very infancy. They are carried to the grave almost as soon as born.

“Their all of life, a rosy ray,  
Blushed into dawn and pass'd away.”

But they do not therefore fail of the great end of their being. They had no opportunity to repent and

to exercise faith in Christ; never even had intellect sufficiently developed to comprehend the simplest truth of redemption. But, neither were they guilty of actual transgression; and washed in the blessed blood of atonement, they shall be borne to the bosom of Him who has said, "*Of such is the kingdom of heaven.*" Their life was indeed a vapor; but they were not denied the boon of immortality.

If others—if the wicked are cut down by the fearful stroke of sudden and unexpected judgment, it is not till opportunities of repentance and admonitory warnings have been given. Who of you, my hearers, has not been earnestly and affectionately warned of the peril of death? "Boast not thyself of to-morrow"—ye, *that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, and which are crushed before the moth.* Who of you has not been earnestly, affectionately, and sincerely invited to Christ? By the ten thousand providences whose voices are coming up from ten thousand graves, all over the land—no less than by his Word—is God saying to each one of you, "*Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live.*"

Every false trust is leveled with the dust. What is yours? *Is it your riches?* "They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him; that he should still live forever, and not see corruption." *Is it your wisdom?* Behold, "there is no remembrance of the wise more than of the fool forever;" *for the wise, like the fool and the brutish person,*

*perish. Is it your family connection and power?* Remember that “men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie;” “put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.” Is it your abundant resources? Are you saying, “Soul, take thine ease?” are you laying to yourself the flattering unction of “much goods” and “many years?” Alas, couldst thou but read that strange writing upon the wall of conscience, it might be as of old—“this night thy soul shall be required of thee.”

There can be no injustice in an uncertainty of which we have such full and ample warning. Were we promised immunity and then denied; or, were we left in ignorance or in doubt, and then hurled forward to suffer an unexpected doom—we might have some ground to complain. But warning meets us at every turn. It comes from the skies above and the earth beneath. It comes from the desolated homes of earth and the charnel houses of the dead. Unnumbered voices take up the notes of warning, and with solemn earnestness proclaim—fellow-mortal, to you, and to me—that *there is no discharge in this war.*

2. Again, this uncertainty of life is justified from the fact that it brings a moral power to bear upon the mind of the sinner, which is absolutely necessary, and which can be derived from no other source. Take away this constant liability to death; silence the warning voice of conscience and of Revelation; and what can you expect of the soul in love with sin, but that it will remain impenitent and unrenewed? has the individual a lease upon life? is it

fixed that the great Ruler must first serve a notice upon him and for a specified time, before he can be taken away? You would, then, not expect him to even begin his preparation to move till the notice had been served. Or, suppose *threescore and ten years* were assured to every individual—what would be the result? how many would live on in sin till the very last hour? Appeal to the young man of twenty! why, he will say, “I have half a century yet left.” Go to the man of *thirty*, of *forty*, of *fifty*! why, he will plead, “I have yet *forty*, *thirty*, *twenty* years remaining; there is time enough yet.” And so on to the very last year, and month, and day, and hour! And what would be the result?

The obvious and alarming result, my friends, would be this: A whole life of influence would be lost to the cause of Christ; and then the man would come down to the close of life with no preparation for eternity! All his habits, and feelings, and thoughts are averse to religion. It is doubtful whether it would be possible for him now, under the paralyzing effect of the near and certain approach of death, to throw off the manacles he had been binding to himself all his life long! But suppose this possible; and that at the last hour he enters heaven: *how* does he enter? Alas! his *whole life has been perverted and lost*, and the immortal faculties, which it was life’s great work to cultivate and enlarge, are dwarfed and blighted forever.

3. And yet, some one will say—admitting all that has been alleged in relation to the sinner, and that there is imperative need—this warning should be



perpetually sounding in the ear of the wicked; there certainly can be no need of it for the Christian. Why, then, should *he be subjected to this uncertainty of life?*

Suppose, my friend, that an exemption from sudden death was secured to the Christian—what would be the effect upon the ungodly and the sinner? Why, they would seek religion—not from any deep abhorrence of sin and longing desire to be delivered from it—not from any admiration of the beauty of holiness and desire to obtain it; but as a *worldly good, and an exemption from bodily harm*. No ardent longing after immortality; no yearning of soul for the purity and the bliss of heaven! but simply how to secure exemption from sudden death. Thus the pure and heavenly motives that should win a soul to Christ would be utterly wanting. Nay, the very element of moral virtue would be absent, and worldly selfishness would usurp its place. To such, our Savior might say, “Ye follow me not because ye saw the miracle; but because ye ate of the loaves and were filled.”

But, again, is it true that even the Christian does not need *life's uncertainty* as a continual stimulus to activity in the divine life? How often would he become sluggish in the way! how often tempted to loiter, to cull the flowers of fancy, to drink in the pleasures of the world! But there is ever coming up from the holy Word, and breaking in solemn tones upon his ear, “Ye know not when the Master of the house cometh; at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning;” “watch ye, therefore.”

Why, my brethren, even now, with a dying world all around, with God above and eternity just before us, how terrible the apathy of the Church! But should this pressure of an oncoming eternity—just at hand, and ready at any moment to burst upon us—be taken away, alas! is there not reason to fear that the life of faith would absolutely die out and become extinct upon the face of the whole earth?

We are brought, then, to the conclusion that this uncertainty of life is one of those providential allotments which, though terrible in itself, and involving sudden and alarming transitions from life to death, is beneficent in its general design, and indispensable in the present condition of the race. Through the dark cloud that overhangs the whole earth, and spreads the pall of blackness and of gloom everywhere, there comes down this ray of heavenly shining—the mercy of Him, who knoweth the feebleness of our frame that we are but dust.

4. Again, we justify this uncertainty of human life from the fact that death-bed repentances and preparations for heaven are too often—nay, I will say for the most part, illusory and without foundation. I do not limit the boundless mercy of a sin-forgiving God, nor yet his power to cleanse and save the repenting soul. I will not say but what many a sinner at the last hour, like the thief upon the cross, has been purified by the blood of Christ, and is now robed in white before the eternal Throne. And every sinner who does truly repent and heartily believe in Christ, even though it be the act of a

moment, is saved. But this repenting and believing, against the whole current and force of life's habits, and amid the agony and terror of a dying hour, is not so easy a thing. Many have thus sought God, and have died in apparent peace; we will hope for them. They have passed the bounds of human responsibility, and we will leave them with their God. But, my friends, how has it been with others, who, from the valley of death where they, to all appearance, repented and likewise received pardoning mercy, came back to life? In many instances that are known it proved nothing more than the delirium of a dream, and in nearly all such cases the reformation has proved unsubstantial and evanescent as the morning vapor. My brethren, I turn a deaf ear to this siren song of a death-bed repentance. It has deluded more to hang their hope of heaven upon its uncertain trust, who, when their eyes have opened upon the eternal world, have found themselves in hell, being in torment, than it was ever instrumental in carrying up to heaven.

Beloved, I would not disturb the hope which fond friendship has cherished for the departed. But the solemnities of the occasion and the gravity of this great truth demand that I should deal soberly and earnestly with you. And surely if there is one this side of eternity who is prepared to warn you against the postponement of religion to a dying hour, it is he who has wrestled in agony over the dying man, praying, as it were, against hope, rejoicing in his apparent conversion, and yet in the end coming to know that it was all the delirium of a dream!

Then, again, in this connection, it is an almost universal impression that while very few live habitually prepared to die, equally few die unprepared. There seems to be an idea that there is something in death itself—something in the process of dying—that refines the moral nature and changes the man. But, my friends, there is not that difference between the *living* and the *dying* world that we imagine. We shall, in all probability, die as we have lived. The characters we have formed in time we shall carry with us down into the grave. They will cling to us in eternity.

Then, too, I observe an almost universal dread of sudden death. Nor can we wonder at this dread when we consider how momentous an event death is, and how solemn the realities it involves. But after all does it not spring—does it not receive force and point—mainly in the consciousness that we have not an habitual preparation for death, and the consequent “dread of something *after* death?” Does it not spring from a consciousness that we are leaving something undone which we would wish to repair in a dying hour. And yet how rare are the instances in which death does not come suddenly! Down to the last hour of life, and almost to the latest gasp, the wasting consumptive will repeat his oft-told, delusive story of “being a little better,” thus hugging the delusive hope of life till its last sand is already falling from life’s emptied glass. Who of us will die when, and where, and as we suppose? Probably not one. The fact is, death comes suddenly to all. It breaks in upon all the unfinished plans of life, and

hurries its victim away. No startling admonition breaks upon the air.

Thus we find this uncertainty of life interwoven with all our history. No one can rise above it; no one can break away from it. And yet how necessary is all this! for when *will* a man disentangle himself from the world and get ready to die? When *could* death find a man with all his plans of life consummated, no new scheme of worldly enterprise inspiring his ambition, and no old, unfinished plan he would like to complete before he was hurried away?

Having thus justified the uncertainty of human life, we pass to notice some of the lessons to be derived from the subject.

1. And, first, it teaches us that sudden death is not to be regarded in all cases as a special judgment. It is rather an incident in the unfolding of a great and beneficent system that involves the well-being of the race. It is, indeed, sometimes a thunderbolt in the hand of the Almighty to cut off a wicked and sinning Ahab; but it is also sometimes the chariot of flame in which an Elijah rides up to his coronation in the skies.

2. But again, the subject warns us impressively and solemnly against presuming upon the future. How many there are who, intoxicated with the pleasures of the world, flattered by the abundance of their resources, the security and certainty of their plans, are laying to their souls the flattering unction that *their mountain standeth strong, and they shall never be moved!* My friend, let me ask you, as you cast your gaze down into the dark and uncertain

future, to say what is to protect you from the unexpected and overwhelming calamities that have fallen upon others? What is the pillar of your strength—the rock of your defense? What earthly treasure have you that is exempt from the mutation that stamps all things earthly? Your beauty shall fade away; your manly vigor shall be succeeded by the infirmity and decrepitude of age; your riches shall be cankered, your friends pass away, and your life—what is it but a vapor?

Warning voices spring up from every quarter; they send forth their admonitory tones through all the walks of life, and bid us *presume not upon the morrow*. The silent stars, as they course their nightly rounds through the heavens, the joyous sun as he rises in the east and hastens to his setting, the great tide of human life as it sweeps along its crowded channels to return no more, bid us *presume not upon the morrow*. The crushed and blighted hopes of unnumbered millions, coming up like the despairing wail of a lost soul, admonish us to beware how we trust to the contingencies of an uncertain future.

3. Again, the subject teaches us that we need a more substantial foundation than human life affords upon which to build. What earthly hope can there be for “them that dwell in houses of clay whose foundation is in the dust, and which are crushed before the moth?” Alas, how difficult it is to associate ourselves with the *dying* as well as the living world! Every moment we see youth, and beauty, and fortune passing away with a sudden shock that

alarms our fears for the moment, and then we pass on as though we expected to live forever!

“All men think all men mortal but themselves.” The most sudden and alarming transitions from life to death produce only a momentary impression on the dust that breathes. But with all the tenderness and concern of one whose sympathies are deep and broad as they are pure, the appeal is made unto you—*“What is your life? It is even as a vapor that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away.”*

We may lay deep our schemes, build with unmeasured toil the airy castle of our worldly delusions; but the mighty fabric, imposing as it may appear in the eyes of mortals, is but a house built upon the sand. The very first tempest that sweeps along will undermine its foundation and leave it a desolate ruin. The “Rock of Ages” is the only sure basis on which the hope of mortals can ever rest. To one whose hope is firmly planted here, what matters it though every worldly hope be withered and destroyed? What though death should rise up amid his noon-tide or evening walks? His steadfast heart shall fear no ill. For him the waves of Jordan have no terror, and the dark valley no gloom; for in the triumphant hope of glory yet to be revealed, the day of his death is hailed as the day of his release from life’s dark and wearisome journey—the day of his exaltation to immortal bliss. To such,

“There is no death: what seems so is transition;  
This life of mortal breath  
Is but the suburb of the life elysian,  
Whose portal we call death.”

4. The thoughts suggested in this discourse find force and impressiveness in the solemn event that has now summoned us together.

A little over one week ago, before the dawning of the morning, a railroad train starts from an inland city, bearing its precious freight of human life and hope. No warning voice sounds along the pathway of the iron-horse; no consciousness of danger disturbs the repose of the wayfaring company; and no inward presentiment awakens apprehension. Thoughts of business, of home, occupy the mind; and the thrill of delight at the thought of *so soon* meeting the loved ones around the hearth-stone, glows in the heart. The lightning speed of the iron-horse seems not fast enough to hasten the joy of meeting.

But, alas! amid these dreams—what jar is that? Down, down—the frightful distance of over sixty feet into the yawning chasm below—the car plunges. One loud, sharp, agonizing cry breaks forth upon the stillness of the night—a heavy crash follows, and the work of death is done. No, not done—the crackling fire and the moan of dying agony coming up from that deep and frightful gorge in horrible dissonance, indicate that the work of ruin and of death is still going on.

Among the victims of that awful tragedy was he whose remains we are to-day to bear to their dark and silent home.

The HON. THOMAS H. WHETSTONE, member of the Senate of the State of Ohio, from Hamilton county, is no more. Cut off in the early noon of his manhood, from the midst of his usefulness, and



just as his great intellectual and moral worth was attaining the highest public recognition—the community mourn his loss ; the Church mourns it ; and, above all, his friends and family bow down in sorrow under the terrible bereavement that has fallen upon them.

Mr. Whetstone was born in the city of Cincinnati, in the year 1815, September 17th, and was consequently a little over forty-eight years of age at the time of his death. Whatever advantages wealth, and education, and Christian nurture, in the hands of intelligent and pious parents, could bestow upon a young man, were his. His early education and training had reference to the profession of law ; and had he devoted himself to this department of life, the cast of his mind—the strength, breadth, and penetration of his intellect, his high sense of honor, and his sterling integrity—would have given him a high place at the bar.

But when he came to age, his love of rural life, combined probably with that native diffidence, and that instinctive shrinking from public demonstration which characterized him all through his life, and even in his public career, induced him to devote himself to agriculture. Whatever other causes may have contributed to this result, they robbed the profession of one who would scarcely have failed to become an honor and an ornament to either the bar or the bench. But, one of our city journals has well said that “the spirit with which he has pursued the occupation of his choice, and the cultivated mind he has brought to bear upon his labors, have ennobled

his calling, and at the same time elevated his own standing in society."

In 1839 Mr. Whetstone was awakened at a camp meeting and joined the Methodist Church as a seeker of religion. And not long after he experienced pardoning mercy in the Old Brick Church, at Salem, so honored in the early history of Methodism in the great North-West. From that time forward he has been known and honored for his self-sacrificing and untiring efforts to promote the cause of the Redeemer. The Church planted in his neighborhood and sustained mainly through his influence; the Sunday school of which he was superintendent, and which owed so much to his personal exertions; the little class of which he was the leader and religious guide—all bear witness to the sincerity of his devotion and the constancy of his labor. If they have never before appreciated his worth, they will appreciate it now. If they have never before fully apprehended how true, and noble, and generous his heart, they will apprehend it now. Ah, who will rise up in that neighborhood to fill the vacancy in the Church of God! The standard-bearer has fallen! ah, who now shall take up the standard and bear it onward in the Sunday school and in the Church!

The lay-offices of the Church were never sought by our departed brother; but *they* sought him as one that could wield them with honor to the cause and good to the world. When, at the last General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, it was found necessary for important ends, to organize a Board of Trustees for the whole Church, Mr.

Whetstone was made a member of that board, and his associates had expected much from the wisdom of his counsels and the efficiency of his zeal.

Mr. Whetstone was an earnest promoter of the public good. The cause of education, the erection of school-houses, and public improvements in every department found in him a strong advocate and efficient worker. Though at the farthest possible remove from personal or selfish ends, such a man could not pass through life without having demands made upon him for public service. Those who knew him regarded him as being equal to and worthy of the highest offices in the gift of the people. For a time modesty held those gifts in abeyance. But as his worth became known the people called him forth and honored him with a seat in the Senate of the State, as a representative of her great commercial city. Retiring and diffident, he did not dash forth like a blazing meteor; but his growth was gradual and sure. His colleagues honored him for the soundness of his judgment, the breadth of his views, and the ability with which he maintained them. They honored him also for his sterling integrity of character. The people recognized in him the able and true representative; and the popular voice compelled him, against his own wishes, to return to the Senate. Here he was serving his fourth session. And it may truly be said, that, from his first entrance into the Senate to the time of his untimely cutting off, his influence continued to grow apace, till few men in that body were more respected and influential than he. A higher and still broader sphere of influence was already

beginning to be confidently predicted for him, by his personal friends, when the sad calamity of which we have spoken closed his useful and honorable career.

There is one more relationship in life—the most tender and delicate of all—of which it remains for us to make mention. On the 17th of September, 1840—the 25th anniversary of his birth—he was married to Miss Esther Mears, daughter of the late, lamented Thomas Mears. To them were given nine children—seven sons and two daughters. Ever devoted to his country, he did not withhold his eldest son when that country demanded his service. That son is not in our assembly to-day. He was one of the 50,000 heroes who made the memorable march with Sherman—a march that eclipses the fame of the immortal march of Xenophon with his 10,000 Greeks; a march that will shed luster on our country's arms forever. May God bless the son, and make him a worthy representative of the noble manhood of the father!

Only a few weeks since, the friends were gathered at the mansion of our brother to witness the marriage of the eldest daughter to a surgeon in the army, now stationed at Little Rock, Arkansas. How joyous the gathering then! how sad the meeting now! How remote the thought of any one then present was such an event as fills our hearts with sadness to-day! O Death, thou hast prevailed against our brother; thou hast changed his countenance and sent him away!

Dear sister, the long and beautiful dream of your married life has come to a sad and sudden end. You now wake up to the terrible reality that the dear and

loved companion in the journey of so many years is no more. In the awful darkness of this bereavement, you grope around, feeling for him, but find him no longer at your side. The support of that strong arm on which you have so confidently leaned, can no longer shield or sustain you. You call ; but no response comes back. Your wail of entreaty falls upon the dull, cold ear of death ; and the tongue that never faltered in its response of tenderness is mute and silent forever. But let it cheer you, beloved sister, to know that the hour which brought sadness to you was freighted with immortal joy for him ; that the sad accident which left a bruised and mangled body, unprisoned an immortal spirit ; no bruise of the accident marred its divine beauty ; no mark of the fire stained the unsullied whiteness of its robes, and no pent-up, smothering smoke stifled its voice, as joyfully it soared upward and joined in the anthems of eternity. Let it cheer you, dear sister, to know that the parting shall be brief. On the other shore he will wait your coming ; and as you have together walked the rugged pathway of life, so, hand in hand, shall you walk upon the banks of the river of life. Nerve yourself for your new duties—for your greater responsibilities. No one can share those burdens with you now ; but the thought of doing what *he* would approve, and smile to see you do if he were alive and looking on, will make you strong for the burden, and cheer you all along the way.

Children, let me charge you, amid the solemnities of this hour, cherish the memory of that dear,

departed father. Never, O never let that drooping, sorrowing mother have occasion to sigh over your waywardness or disobedience. Stand nobly by her side. So far as it is in your power make up the loss she has sustained. And may the God of your father be your God forever!

Beloved friends, fellow-members of the Church of Christ—brothers and sisters—aged parents—we sorrow not as those who sorrow without hope. Amid this scene of bereavement and of agony there comes down a voice of sweetest melody and of divinest authority to relieve our despondency and chase away our gloom. “*Thy dead men shall live ; together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust.*” In this certain and glorious hope, we mingle the ashes of our brother with their native earth—rejoicing that there *shall* be a *resurrection of the dead*. Amen.

## XI.

## AN APPEAL FOR CITY MISSION-WORK.

DELIVERED IN MORRIS CHAPEL, CINCINNATI, MARCH 17, 1867.

*"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."* 2 Cor. viii, 9.

THERE is something in self-sacrifice and suffering for the good of others that makes a deep and abiding impression on the human heart. The patriot who sacrifices ease and perils life for his country is held in grateful memory. The self-sacrifice of Howard, who devoted his life to the mitigation of human suffering in its lowest and darkest forms, has ever challenged the admiration of the world. Florence Nightingale, who in our own age mitigated, by angelic ministries, the horrors of the Crimean war, is a name of beauty and of praise. All these are gems in the coronet of humanity. Men who reviled them while living, praise them when they are dead.

But the sublimest instance of this self-sacrifice, which the history of the race affords, is that referred to in our text: "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." There was something glorious in the

character of Jesus—his wisdom, his untarnished purity, his lofty adhesion to principle, his faithfulness to his friends, his unselfish love, his mysterious power over the elements of nature, his equanimity amid the buffetings of his enemies, his calmness in times of peril, his unshaken confidence in truth, and his implicit submission to the will of the Father, all conspire to make him a wonderful character. But that in his character and life which has taken deepest hold upon the heart of humanity, and wrought most deeply into the life of the world; that which has challenged the admiration of his enemies in all ages, and made the infidel vie with the Christian in eulogies upon the character of Jesus, is his self-sacrifice and suffering for the common brotherhood of the race.

Incomparably more glorious was the self-sacrifice of Jesus than that of any hero, or sage, or philanthropist, or martyr, in any age or clime, in the world's history. The character of the victim was more lofty; the object for which he died more sacred; and the results of his sacrifice more comprehensive and lasting.

Let us then notice, first, the self-sacrifice of Jesus; and, secondly, the believer's enrichment.

I. And, first, the self-sacrifice of Jesus. We said it was the sublimest instance of self-sacrifice recorded in the history of the world.

1. It is enhanced if we consider the riches he laid aside. "Though he was rich he became poor."

(1.) Reference is evidently had here to the riches of his *antecedent life*, that is, the riches he had before



he came into this world. He never had any riches on earth, and therefore he did not become poor *in* this world ; but he became poor *in coming* into it.

Socinianism, which denies the divinity, and consequently the preëxistence of Christ, has always been sorely perplexed with this passage. Its interpretation is, that “Jesus was rich in power and in the Holy Ghost.” But then the trouble comes in when it is said he *became poor*. Surely, even the contemner of the divinity of our blessed Lord will not contend that he became poor in those divine graces. Nay, he was never wanting in *power*, even in his poverty. He hushed the winds and calmed the waves ; he healed the sick and raised the dead. So also was he, to the very close of life, rich in all the fullness of the Holy Ghost.

The riches laid aside, then, were not riches of earth ; he never had them—he never wanted them ; but it was the riches of his antecedent glory—the glory he had with the Father even before the world was. Hence, in another place the apostle speaks of him as one “who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God ; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men ; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” Ephesians ii, 6–8.

“How great the riches of his grace !  
He left his throne above,  
And, swift to save a ruined race,  
He flew on wings of love.

The Almighty Former of the skies  
Stooped to our low abode,  
And angels viewed with wondering eyes  
And hailed the incarnate God."

(2.) "*He was rich.*" The owner as well as the creator of all things; "for by him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things are created by him and for him." Colossians i, 16. Such is the summing up of the riches of the Lord of life and glory. His right is the most absolute that can be conceived of in the universe—that of *creation*. His possessions were boundless beyond our power of thought or utterance. The gold and the silver are the Lord's, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. So, also, the riches of the vast ocean. The earth with its fullness belonged unto him. The man who acquires a few hundred acres, especially if it is enriched with a beautiful water-fall or shining lake, prides himself upon his good fortune. But behold, all the broad acres of the earth are the Lord's, and every water-fall and mountain cascade, and every lake, and rivulet, and ocean—all belong unto him.

(3.) "*He was rich.*" In him were all the resources of power. He had control of the elements. He rebuked the winds and hushed the waves. The few loaves and the handful of little fishes he multiplied till hungry thousands fed and were filled. He opened the eyes of the blind, and the sightless balls flashed with light. He touched the bier of the dead, and death itself leaped into life.

Even his enemies could have had no power over him, had he not voluntarily laid aside the riches of his power. He might have summoned legions of angels to his aid; he might have summoned the slumbering elements of nature from their hiding-places to come forth and do his bidding upon his foes. Even to the judge who condemned him he said, "*Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above.*" John xix, 11.

It is the glory of the self-sacrifices of Jesus that they were voluntary at every stage of progress. Sometimes a philanthropist or reformer will, in the heat of the fearful conflict, faint in purpose, and would gladly retire, but that they are publicly committed to some great principle, and are bound to sink or swim, die or live with it. The patriot soldier often, when the battle is raging around him, thinks of life and home, and would be glad to flee away. Not so with the sacrifices of Jesus. He would not remit a single pang; he would not pluck a single thorn from the crown of his suffering. The bitter cup he drank to its very dregs. And every gush of agony in the garden, and every pang upon the cross, were voluntarily endured by the suffering Son of God.

2. Again, the greatness of the self-sacrifices of Jesus will be apparent further if we consider the poverty to which he descended.

(1.) "*He became poor*" in his family relationship. His parents, though of the house of David, were poor. They were of an obscure family, and dwelt in one of the most unpromising villages of Galilee.

His father was a carpenter, and probably never rose above the necessity of daily toil. It is certain that the family was never lifted above their condition of poverty, for in the dying agony of the cross the Savior commends his own mother to the charity of one of his disciples.

His fellow-citizens and neighbors made this objection to his ministry as he stood up in their synagogue and performed his miracles in their presence. "Whence hath this man this wisdom and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary, and his brethren James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence, then, hath this man all these things?" Matthew xiii, 54-56. It was by this voluntary humiliation in being born of a family in poverty that the blessed Redeemer allied himself to the great majority of families on the earth, and especially to that very class of families that need such an alliance to lighten their dark and gloomy pathway, and to make them feel that their condition was ennobled and made hopeful and joyous by their relationship to the Son of God.

(2.) "*He became poor*" in his own condition. He had no home; was supported by the charity or by that holier word, love of his friends. He could say, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." Luke ix, 58. He died as he had lived, *a poor man*. And it is thus that he has allied himself to the great heart of humanity—become a brother to the great majority of the race.

He is the poor man's Savior. False gods and false lords are held up as renowned heroes, men of valor and mighty power in arms; gorgeous palaces and temples are their habitation; riches, and kingdoms, and earthly power are their inheritance. They are lifted out of the sphere of sympathy that encircles the great mass of men. But, blessed be God, our Savior lives in the very heart of that sympathy! And it is by this very power that he enters into the great heart of humanity, and through his own poverty makes it rich.

II. We come, then, secondly, to notice the believer's enrichment. "That ye through his poverty might be rich." How, and in what respect, may the believer be enriched by the self-sacrificing and voluntary poverty of Christ?

I. "*Might be rich*" in higher and nobler views of the mission of life. With many, life is simply a place for business—a mart in which they may buy and sell, and gain riches. The pleading voices of humanity that come up from every quarter, beseeching sympathy in their sorrows, and relief from their miseries, are unheeded by them. The better feelings of their own nature—prompting to goodness, and love, and beneficence—are all drowned by the grating gutturals of mammon. What a standing rebuke to all such are the life and character of the Lord Jesus Christ!

When he comes into fellow-sympathy with us, he makes us feel that there is yet something noble in the nature of man, and that life has a great and holy mission. It is said of heathen philosophers and

poets that they taught the immortal gods how to live like mortal men—creatures of lust, of passion, and of cruelty. But Christ Jesus, by the embodiment of virtue, by the manifestations of benevolence and mercy, would teach mortals how to be, and to live like God.

2. "*Might be rich*" with a present interest in the atoning blood of the great Redeemer. He that has Christ for his portion—Christ dwelling within him—life within life, so to speak—is a possessor of the true riches, the fadeless joy.

A Christian gentleman was visiting a nobleman in the North of England, when the latter took him out to look at his estate. He pointed out the beautiful meadow lands stretching away as far as the eye could reach, the cultivated glebes and hill-sides, the broad pastures swarming with the choicest herds, and the forests crowning the distant hill-tops. "All these," said the proud nobleman, "are mine." "But do you see that little white cottage?" asked the Christian gentleman, pointing to what seemed a mere speck in the vast estates of the rich nobleman. "Yes; but what of it?" "Why, there lives a poor widow—a tenant of yours—whose estate, after all, is worth more than your own. In a few years you will die. A few feet of earth will be all that will then be left to you of all your possessions; but she has Christ for her portion, and that is worth more than all the world besides."

He that has Christ dwelling within him has the soul's sublimest, earthly portion! an inheritance richer by far than all the world besides. Why may not that

portion be ours? When shall the soul be filled with unutterable joy?

“When God is mine, and I am his,  
Of Paradise possessed,  
I taste unutterable bliss,  
And everlasting rest.”

3. “*Might be rich*” in the heirship of eternal glory. The richest earthly inheritance is of brief duration. We shall die, and it will pass away. But how am I dignified and ennobled—*made rich*—by my alliance, through Christ, to immortal glory! O, how this revelation of immortality enlarges my vision! how it lifts up my soul! I am a part of the boundless, the indestructible universe of God! I shall dwell with the angels and with God forever!

#### LESSONS.

Let me draw a couple of lessons from this subject, and I have done.

1. The first is a lesson of the worth and dignity of our nature. I do not mean of our individual nature; but of our humanity, even in its darkest and lowest forms. Christ became poor that this humanity of ours might be made rich. Did he not see in it a value? a transcendent worth—that made it worthy of enrichment by the sacrifice and suffering of himself? There is something, then, of worth, of value in human nature, else Christ had never ennobled it by so stupendous a sacrifice.

2. The second lesson is, that we should imitate Christ's example of self-sacrifice for the enriching of others. This is the very spirit of the Gospel.

Every one of you have it in your power, in some way, to coöperate in this work of Heaven. If Christ could become *poor* that these souls might be enriched, how much ought you to do?

There is no place on the wide earth where Christian men can do so much for humanity, for God, as in the great city. There you find *squalid poverty*. Just in proportion as some get rich, others get poor. Overgrown fortunes are always offset by overgrown poverty. And it *is* poverty—poverty deep, dark, debasing—such as the country can form no conception of. Why is this wealth given but that this want may be relieved?

Go, dive down into these dark and damp cellars. Go, climb up these steep and rickety stairways, and enter the crazy old garret. Whom do you find there? *Old men* and old women, going down to the grave in poverty—candidates for the Potter's field. The sun of their morning was, perhaps, as bright and joyous as yours. But O, how dark its setting! Go, let in a ray of sunshine. Their lantern jaws quiver now with hunger; make them quiver with gratitude. Their long and bony fingers are feeling about in the darkness of despair. Speak to them of Jesus; bid them come to him who became poor, that they through his poverty might be made rich, and that dark countenance shall be lighted with the radiance of hope; those bony fingers shall be clasped with holy joy.

Again, whom do you find in these cellars and garrets? *Widows!* What wonder if their children are dirty, ragged, wandering uncared for in the



streets! That mother is engaged in a life-struggle. Poverty can be borne, but who can stand *hunger*? Famishing children are crying for bread. Every moment of life is with her a struggle to keep from starvation. Yes, and she will struggle on, every day growing more thin and weak, every day the light fading from her eye, hope dying in her heart, till at last she falls beneath her load, and, with the sorrowful exclamation, "God pity my little ones!" the brave woman dies. And can this be in a Christian city, within call of Christian men and Christian women, who have an abundance and to spare? Does not this sad picture of want, and still sadder picture of neglect, belong to some heathen country, some land of darkness and barbarism? Would that we could make that plea! But, alas, my brethren, if the wail of that expiring agony has not entered our ears and touched our hearts it is because we have not chosen to listen to the sad, repulsive sound.

Are there any such widows in this city? Any whose condition might be mitigated and whose burden lightened by our liberality? Let me answer this question from the Annual Report of the Cincinnati Ladies' Home Mission for 1866. These noble ladies have districted our entire city, and made thousands of visits to poverty-stricken, desolate families. They have distributed clothing and food to the needy, and, while ministering to their physical wants, have striven to carry the bread of life to their starving souls. The effect has been divine. These ladies say: "The tears have coursed down many a furrowed cheek as penitents have told us that they were brought up by

pious parents, were accustomed to attend the Sunday school, and had at one time been members of the Church. Misfortunes fell upon them; poverty and pride kept them from the sanctuary till they became gradually weaned from it. Lower and still lower they sank, till now they live a dreary, wretched life of sin and misery."

But here is the touching picture which will answer the question whether there are in this city any such widows and any such homes of desolation as we have described: "We found two delicate, pretty children sleeping on the bare floor, with only rags to cover them. There are six in the family. They have one shuck bed, one old sheet, one army blanket, one bench, on which a grown boy sleeps. The next room was occupied by a widow, who washed for her living, and tried to support her little ones in this way. She carried all the water she used about two squares, and then up stairs to her little room, where she washed. One day, after washing twelve dozen pieces, she laid down to die. None to take care of her but her children, she was taken to the hospital. As she was being taken out of the room, she turned her eyes on her four fatherless children, and the tears rolled down her face, while she was too weak to utter a farewell. She died soon after, and her overworked little girl soon followed her. Her few articles of old furniture and poor clothing were sold, her little boys put in the orphan asylum; and thus ends the earthly history of one poor woman. But her history is the history of hundreds."

Go, make that toiling widow's heart rejoice.

Minister to her earthly wants; speak to her of the love of Jesus; how he became poor, that we, through his poverty, might be rich. Go, do this. The day is coming, beloved brother, Christian sister—the day is coming when it shall comfort your own fainting heart to know that the blessing of him that was ready to perish is laid up in heaven to your account.

Again, whom will you find in these cellars and garrets? *Children.* They are covered with rags, grimed with dirt, pinched with hunger. Their evil passions are uncurbed; the sweet voice of holy love never falls upon their ears or touches their hearts. But brawling, and drunkenness, and profanity, and obscenity pollute the very atmosphere they breathe. Christian men and women, go to these little ones; wash and scrape the grime from their countenances; comb out their matted locks; take off their filthy rags and clothe them. The off-cast garments of your own children will be royal apparel to them. Bring them into the Sunday school, and you shall save multitudes of them from being vagabonds in the earth—a curse to themselves and to the world. Nay, perhaps from among them you may gather here and there a gem that shall sparkle with immortal brightness in the diadem of the blessed Redeemer.

It is the testimony of those engaged in this work that no class of children, when once brought into the Sabbath school, seem to enjoy its privileges more, or join more heartily in singing our blessed Sunday school melodies. Nor is the effect confined to the Sunday school and the Sabbath. One of the missionaries, referring to one of the God-forsaken

neighborhoods of the city, says: "As I was driving along Harrison Road one evening toward the Brighton House, I noticed about half a dozen little girls sitting on the steps of a brewery, singing one of our Sunday school hymns. I drove up to the side-walk and joined with them, apparently to their great delight. As soon as they finished one piece they would commence another. The German women stopped to listen; the men came out from the brewery; the boys filled the steps, and seemed to enjoy the novel Sunday school. After singing four or five pieces, I asked them if they all went to Sunday school. 'Yes, yes,' they answered. 'Where do you go?' 'Over to Blanchard Mission.' 'That is right. Good-by.' 'Good-by, preacher,' answered a dozen voices." Thus this city mission-work evokes the praises of God in places strange and novel, and from young hearts that had otherwise remained unblessed.

Among the temporal ameliorations wrought by this Home Mission Society, there is one that must not be overlooked. It descends to the work of gathering up the little girls, of ages varying from six to fifteen or more, and teaching them to use the needle. And on Saturday afternoons hundreds of nimble fingers may be seen plying their gentle work, and at the same time learning practical lessons that shall largely contribute to the sum total of their life's happiness and usefulness. We spoke of this as a "temporal amelioration." May it not be in the largest sense also spiritual? The physical and the spiritual are so interblended in our very nature, as well as in all social organization, that no real

improvement can be made in the one without good coming to the other.

During the thirteen years of the working time of this Society, more than *ten thousand* different children have been enrolled upon its Sunday school records; and over *five hundred* souls have been hopefully converted to God. Surely the seed, which has been sown broadcast through all those years, has not all perished. Some of it has taken root and borne fruit in spite of the stony ground and the choking thorns. Much of this Home mission-work is in localities that preclude the idea of the establishment of self-sustaining Churches. It is not only purely mission-ground—as purely as any that can be found in the lands of heathenism—but from the very nature of the case must remain so for many years, if not for all coming time. They are the localities down into which vice, poverty, and misery gravitate; but up out of which the Gospel brings men and women, when they are redeemed and clothed in their right mind. If the fruit is not apparent, the labor is not lost. Its blossoming promise is as grateful to the eye, and its divine fruitage is as precious in the sight of God as though garnered in the most costly and splendid temple.

In referring again to the Report of the Ladies, I perceive that they already have planted six principal stations, with suitable lots and buildings for the work; and that this has been accomplished at an outlay of about \$50,000, the fruit and the evidence of the Christian liberality of our Churches in this city. “These,” say they, “are purely mission points. Some of them

can never be expected to become self-sustaining charges, unless some great change should take place in their respective neighborhoods. But they will continue to be proper fields for mission effort; it may be they will need it more and more. Of other points we have good hope that they will become, ere long, self-sustaining charges. It is the policy of the Society, as soon as that is the case, to transfer the control and management of the Church property to the respective societies. And while we bid Godspeed to those that have or may be able to set up for themselves, we will turn with a stronger heart and firmer purpose to break up new ground, and plant new schools and churches. We are determined that the work of redeeming and saving the masses in the forsaken and degraded parts of our city shall go forward, and, with the blessing of God, increase from year to year. While we join in sending the Gospel to the heathen abroad, we will also strive to bring it to the heathen homes and heathen hearts to be found in our very midst."

Nor have the Churches wearied in well-doing. For I see that \$10,000, nearly, have been contributed to this work during the past Conference year. Of their work, the ladies say in language as touching for its beauty as for its truth: "Ours is a work of toil and sacrifice. It brings no compensation of worldly honor or worldly pleasure. But we know that young hearts are made glad and grateful; we know that sinners are redeemed to Christ and saved; and we trust that the Master will look with approval upon us and upon our work. The most blessed reward we

can hope to receive will be, in the hour of our extremity, to hear Him say, 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.'

You say, brethren, "this is a good work. It ought to be done; but I have my business to attend to; it presses me every day. My heart is in the work; but I can't spare the time." All true, brethren; and it is for this very reason that the work has been committed to the noble Christian women who have carried it forward with so much success and usefulness.

As you can not give yourselves to the work, give your means. Replenish the exhausted treasury of this city mission-work. Do it heartily as unto the Lord; do it freely, and according as the Lord has given unto you. And then, not only to the ladies who *work*, but unto you who *give*, shall the divine Master say, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

If the season is unpropitious in its business aspects—as some of you say—trade diminishing, goods declining in value, and every thing betokening a severe strain upon the business nerve of the city, remember that the necessities and the wants of the work are all the greater because of that. In the scale, over against your diminishing *profits*, I place the increasing *necessities* of these poor souls. And in the name of the just Judge, I ask you which shall outweigh?

"Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,

that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." In his name, and for his sake, I hold up this eminent Christian charity before you! I summon these tenants of poverty, darkness, and death into your presence; I summon before you these toiling widows, and ask you to look upon the wasted form—the sad, sunken countenance—the long, bony fingers, whose very flesh has been worn away by unremitting toil and consuming want; I gather up before you, in lengthened procession, these two thousand children, bright-eyed immortals, clouded with sin and death, and simply ask you to do like your Lord!



## XII.

## REWARDS OF CHRISTIAN EXERTION.

*"She hath done what she could."* Mark xiv, 8.

OUR Savior, having warned his disciples of his approaching end, and having finished those special counsels given them on the occasion, came with them to Bethany. Here resided Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead; also his two sisters, Martha and Mary. Here, also, resided Simon, who had probably been healed of his leprosy by Christ. In the society of these friends our Savior proposed to spend his last Sabbath upon the earth.

A feast is prepared in honor of the visit of so dear a friend and so illustrious a guest. Here again the two sisters manifest the difference of their characters in the manner in which they express their love and gratitude to Christ. The industrious Martha was busied with serving at the table, counting it an honor to be a servant at the feast where her loved Savior was a guest. But Mary, filled with indescribable emotions, and thinking no sacrifice too great wherewith to honor Christ, "having an alabaster box of very precious ointment," "she brake the box and poured it on his head," "and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her

hair; and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment."

This costly anointing, so contrary to all their notions of economy and prudence, filled the disciples with indignation. They could not appreciate the deep and holy feelings which had prompted the sacrifice. They knew that such outward demonstrations of respect to his person had been uniformly avoided rather than sought by their Master. Hence, they said, "To what purpose is this waste? For this ointment might have been sold for much and given to the poor." And Judas, who appears to have had special indignation, enters into an estimate of the value of the ointment thus wasted, and how much good it might have done had it been given to the poor.

The timid and sensitive Mary must have felt sorely wounded at these reflections. And perhaps she had begun to question within herself whether she had not been betrayed by her pious feelings into an act of indiscretion and extravagance. What a relief must she have experienced when she found herself approved and justified by her Lord and Master! "Let her alone; why trouble ye her? She hath wrought a good work on me. For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good; but me ye have not always. She hath done what she could; she hath come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying." If Mary felt encouraged and relieved by this substantial mark of her Lord's approval, how must her heart have exulted while he added, "Verily I say unto you,

wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her!"

The world often judge of the labors and sacrifices of the servants of God by the same standard that is here set up. Nay, often the selfish, worldly-minded professor, contracted and narrow in his views, groveling and selfish in his aims, sets up the same standard and makes the same complaint. "Why is this waste? Why the expenditure of so much money for the erection and beautifying of the church? Why so much to send the Gospel to the heathen, when there are so many poor and starving at home? Why give so much to the cause of Christ when worldly prudence would dictate that it should be laid up to provide against future want? Why devote so much time to religious service and to works of mercy and love when business or domestic duties have such strong claims?" This is the reasoning of worldly policy in all ages. Had Mary acted upon reasonings like these, she would not, indeed, have incurred the censure of Judas; but neither would she have received the approval of Christ. And the memorial of her love and her devotion would never have shed its fragrance and its loveliness over the Christian spirit and character of all ages. Let the world exercise its prudence and forethought; let it hoard riches and be crowned with honors; but give me the memorial of Christian love. Let me all along the rugged pathway of life—let me in its closing scene but hear the approval of Heaven—"he hath done what he could!" It shall cheer my

rugged way; it shall dissolve the gloom of the dark valley; it shall enable my soul in holy triumph to cry out,

“Labor is rest, and pain is sweet,  
If thou, my God, art here.”

We have selected this text as the foundation of a few remarks upon the *REWARDS OF CHRISTIAN EXERTION*.

That God calls the Christian to a sphere of active duty and of high responsibility must be obvious to every reflecting mind. Every designation of Christian character is expressive of this. They are “co-workers” with Christ; they are “lively stones” in the great spiritual temple of our God. The Christian is a contender in the race, striving to reach the goal; he is a warrior, struggling against principalities and powers, his brow already flushed with dawning victory, and his hand outstretched to take the immortal crown. The prospective rewards of labor cheer the laborer, no matter how humble the sphere of his toil. The prospect of the speedy completion of his building nerves the arm of the builder and makes it strong. Amid the toil and dust of the race the runner would sink down in weariness, but the prospect of reaching the goal inspires him with fresh courage; he forgets his sweat and toil, and presses forward to the mark. Amid the din and carnage of the battle-field the warrior sees the ensigns of victory perched upon the banners of his country, and, forgetting his weariness and his wounds, he bounds forward to join in the mighty shout of triumph.

So it is well for the Christian, now and then, to look away from, or rather beyond toils and duties, cares and perils, to their rewards. The prospect shall kindle anew his ardor, shall make him forget weariness and toil, shall make him feel that he fights not in vain ; for though he contends against principalities and powers, a throne and a dominion, of peerless majesty and of eternal duration, is the prize for which he contends.

1. The first reward or encouragement to Christian exertion we shall mention is THE DIVINE APPROVAL.

It is said of Enoch, who walked with God and was translated so that he did not see death, that "before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." The language of our text is a most clear and striking approval of the expression of Mary's love to the Savior, "She hath done what she could." The approval of the wise and the good in human society has ever been regarded as one of the great incentives to, as well as one of the most precious rewards of virtuous and beneficent deeds. The patriot will endure privation and hardship, exposure and danger, and sacrifice even life itself that he may be rewarded with his country's approval. How inexpressibly dear, then, must it be to the heart of the believer to be assured of the approval of Heaven ! To know that God is looking down, that angels are watching to see how thou toilest for thy God ! how thou strugglest along the highway of life, ever looking upward and tending toward thy destiny ! to know that pure and holy intelligences approve thee in the

conflict, and wait to crown thee conqueror, can not but awaken the most pleasing emotions in the soul.

It was this consciousness of the approbation of God that sustained and rejoiced the heart of the great apostle in his toils and sufferings for the cause of Christ. Reviewing his afflictions and persecutions, he says: "For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter;" we suffer "tribulation and distress, persecution, famine, and nakedness, peril, and the sword." But what then? shall they separate us from the love of Christ? "NAY, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us."

The approval of Christ can sweeten every toil, and render delightful every sacrifice we may be called to make in his service. This is to the Christian the noblest source of joy, and the richest reward.

2. Another reward or encouragement to Christian exertion may be found in THE CONSCIOUS SATISFACTION IT AFFORDS.

Whatever may have been the results of our efforts, whether successful or not, there is a conscious satisfaction in having discharged our duty—in having done what we could. This conscious integrity and devotion afford an inward peace and satisfaction, not to be realized from the most successful of worldly schemes. "The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever." Isa. xxxii, 17. Even the apostle could say, "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity,

not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward." 2 Cor. i, 12. Here he recognizes the sincerity and earnestness of his devotion to the cause of Christ as one of the sources of that sublime joy which filled his soul. "Our rejoicing is this"—not the greatness of our success, not the eloquence with which we have preached, not the honor in which we are held by the Church—these, indeed, might be a cause for joy; but we have a higher cause—one more ennobling!—it is the consciousness that our duty has been done, that we have labored for Christ—done what we could. I would, my brethren, that I could make you realize to-day the worth and dignity of this feeling—a consciousness that we have done our duty—as a reward of Christian exertion; one that appeals to the noblest principles and can not fail to bring out the noblest elements of Christian character!

From the very constitution of our nature, we experience conscious gratification from the performance of every virtuous and holy act. Do we extend relief to the hungry and naked? do we visit the poor, the sick, and the fatherless? The very act is attended with a sweet feeling of approbation, which amply compensates for all the toil. Have we stood upon the shore of the stormy ocean, while the shipwrecked mariner, amid the foaming waves, was struggling for life, and crying out for help; and have we run to his relief, breasted the surges of the ocean, and rescued a fellow-mortal from a watery grave? The joy is not merely that we have saved the life of a fellow-mortal;

but the consciousness of having done a noble act is a still richer reward to the soul.

And is not the same conscious gratification—springing from the assurance we have done what we could—one of the most precious rewards of Christian labor? The Christian minister, who has toiled, and wept, and prayed; who has mourned over the desolations of Zion, labored to build up her waste places, and to crown her courts with joy; who has raised a warning voice to the wicked—“turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?”—whatever may be the apparent result, such a minister will find inexpressible relief, and feel within himself a glow of heavenly satisfaction in the conscious assurance that he has done what he could. The pious Christian, intent only upon the glory of his God, and longing for the majesty and glory of the divine appearing, may toil in faith and hope—delaying not when others are cold and indifferent in the work—he will find, in his own soul, a deep under-current of spiritual joy, a consciousness that he has done what he could. The Christian parent, praying and longing for the conversion of wicked and wayward children, even though the great object of his desires and prayers may not be realized, yet will he experience a conscious satisfaction in the effort he has made! This sublime consciousness was illustrated in the closing scene of the life of David. Hear him exclaim, “Although my house be not so with God, yet hath he made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure.” 2 Sam. xxiii, 5.

Who would not prefer this conscious assurance that he has done his duty to all the temporary good



that can be attained by its neglect? Is ease enjoyed? no troubles about duty, no deep convictions of the necessity of Christian effort? no sorrowings of soul over the desolations of Zion? no yearnings of heart—such as cause tears to flow down and sleep to depart in the midnight watches? Ah, my brethren, have any of you such ease as this? O, consider the price at which it is purchased! the sacrifices—the sacrifices of high and holy joy that are made to obtain it! And then say whether the simple conscious self-satisfaction which springs from the discharge of Christian duty be not infinitely preferable to all the stolen pleasures of neglected duty, or of perverted Christian life!

My brethren, you may not now in the midst of the bustling activity of life feel the force of these considerations as you will feel them by and by. In the future, when you tread the shores of the dark river; from the midst of its silence and its gloom, you will look back along the line you have traveled; you will call up the motives and the doings of life. O, then, gold will have become as drops, and earthly honors lighter than vanity; but it shall comfort you, it shall inspire you with strength for your dread voyage, if there shall come up from all along the line of your past life, borne on the pinions of angelic memories, and thrilling like the music of heaven upon your dying ear—“he hath done what he could.” God grant that such angel visitants may meet you, my brethren, at the swellings of Jordan!

3. Another result secured by active exertion in the cause of Christ is found in OUR OWN SPIRITUAL GROWTH.

It is a divine axiom that "he who watereth others, shall also be watered himself." The figurative path of the Christian is "the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Prov. iv, 18. And the Psalmist says, "They go from strength to strength; every one of them appeareth in Zion before God," lxxxiv, 7. "The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree; he shall grow like the cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing," xcii, 12-14. Such also is the description of the prophet—"It will be as the dew unto Israel; he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots like Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive-tree, and his smell as Lebanon. They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine; the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon." Hosea xiv, 5-7.

Whatever may be to others the result of our labors, even though they should prove a savor of death unto death, the effect with regard to ourselves will be certain and glorious. We shall not only rise in the enjoyment of the Divine favor, but there will also be within ourselves a development and growth of all our spiritual faculties. Our faith will be made strong; our gifts and graces will be matured; we shall be planted in the house of the Lord; we shall go from strength to strength, till we appear in Zion before God.

I am aware that some take exceedingly narrow

views of the mission of the Gospel. They look upon it only as a means of escaping hell; and if they could escape hell in any other way, I fear they would attach but little value to the high and ennobling genius of the Gospel—its power to ennoble our humanity and nurture it for companionship with angels and with God. Look upon childhood—its innocence, its beauty, its dependence. Will you tell me that childhood is given simply that we may guard it from bodily ailments—may save it from dying? Is that all? Are not here the elements of growth, of expansion? Here, in embryo, is the future philosopher who shall explore all mysteries; the future hero, who shall gather his laurels from a hundred battle-fields; the future poet, whose immortal verse shall thrill the ages. There is something more to be done with this child than merely to heal its childish ailments and preserve it from death. Here is an embryo that is to grow up into manhood. Just so in the lineaments of the Christian character, I discover an embryo that is to grow up and ripen into angelhood. Thanks be unto God, the Gospel not only contemplates our salvation but our development! We are to become as the angels of God! O, my brethren, shall we then be content to be babes when we ought to be men? Shall we remain dwarfed and stunted in those graces and attainments that ennoble the Christian character and do honor to Christ? I beseech you, then, my Christian brethren, by all that is desirable in exalted Christian attainments, by all that is beautiful in the image of Christ to win men, and by all that is strong in Christian virtue to bring

back a lost world to its allegiance to God—by all this, I beseech you to go forth and labor for God; scatter your seed by the side of all waters, and by and by you shall return bearing your sheaves with you and rejoicing.

4. Another of the rewards of Christian exertion is found in THE SUCCESS WITH WHICH GOD CROWNS IT.

There is a power in the agencies of Divine grace, when they are rightly and perseveringly employed, which almost infallibly secures success. Talk with the sinner; his conscience is on your side; it seconds and confirms your appeal. The Holy Spirit also comes to your aid; it convinces of sin and awakens the desire of pardon. Powerful agencies are cooperating with you. The seed you are sowing shall take root. Long may it slumber in the earth! The winds of many a long and dreary Winter may howl over it, and the ice-girt earth hold it in chains. But the Spring shall yet come; its genial warmth shall quicken into life the germ that had well-nigh perished. Your labors are not in vain in the Lord.

How often have the prayers of a pious mother followed a profligate, wayward son through all his paths of folly and wickedness, till at length, when hope had almost expired, he has been brought to Christ and redeemed from sin and death!

I have somewhere read an account of a pious mother whose only son was a roving wanderer upon the ocean. She was deeply afflicted on account of his irreligious and thoughtless life, and made him the burden of her constant prayers. Many were the agonizing and also believing prayers sent up to

God in his behalf, and yet seemingly without response. Years rolled away, and that mother was on the verge of the grave. Just then her prodigal son returned to pay her a visit. After an affecting meeting, the hardy sailor, gazing upon the pallid countenance of the dying mother, said, "You are near port, mother, and I hope you will have an abundant entrance." She replied, "Yes, my child, the fair haven is in sight, and soon, very soon, I shall be landed

‘On that peaceful shore  
Where pilgrims meet to part no more.’”

“You have weathered many a storm in your passage, mother; but now God is dealing very graciously with you by causing the winds to cease, and by giving you a calm at the end of the voyage.” “God has always dealt graciously with me, my son; but this last expression of his kindness in permitting me to see you before I die, is so unexpected that it is like a miracle wrought in answer to prayer.” “O, mother,” exclaimed the sailor, weeping as he spoke, “your prayers have been the means of my salvation, and I am thankful that your life has been spared till I could tell you of it.” The sainted mother listened with deep interest and heavenly composure to the account of his conversion, so manifestly the result of her long-continued and agonizing prayers, and then, taking his hand, she pressed it to her dying lips and said, “Yes, thou art a faithful God, and I can now say, ‘Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.’” O, what a rich reward for the toils and conflicts

through which that praying mother had passed! And is there a Christian here who would not deem it an abundant reward for the most trying service to be the instrument of bringing a single soul to God?

Even though the Christian should go down to the grave without realizing the result of his labors, yet the word of God remaineth sure. The seed sown by you may bud and blossom long after you are gathered to the tomb. Some years since I witnessed the conversion of a wicked and wayward middle-aged man. His mother had been a woman eminent for her piety in the Wesleyan Church in England. She had gone down to the grave mourning over her wayward son. In his wanderings over the world he came to the city of New York, and there was arrested by the grace of God. His conversion was one of overwhelming power, and the evidence bright and glorious. "My mother's prayers," he exclaimed, "are answered at last." And then he anxiously inquired, "Dô you think she knows it?" Just then a vision came up before me. I remembered that the angels of God are all ministering spirits, and that there is joy among them over one sinner that repenteth. I seemed to see the glorified bending over the battlements of heaven to catch the glad news of a sinner saved ascending up from our sin-cursed earth. Among them was one face that beamed with more ecstatic joy, and one voice that rung out with a clearer and louder strain than all the rest. Yes, sainted mother, thy prayers are answered at last; thy son is saved; Satan strove long and hard, but thy faith has prevailed.

How full of encouragement to the Christian, whose soul is burdened for the souls of men, and whose daily prayer is, "O Lord, revive thy work!" how encouraging, we say, to such to know that the promise of God remaineth sure! Like as the dew descends upon mountain, so comes the promise to his soul—"Your labor is not in vain in the Lord;" "when Zion travails she shall bring forth." The assurance of a harvest to him who will sow is not more sure than this promise of God to his people. Some years since, in a central portion of the State of New York, a pious woman began to be exercised about sinners. She was often in an agony of soul for their conversion, so that groans and tears gushed from her. She hardly knew why she was so exercised; but she kept praying more and more; and often her agony in prayer was so great that it seemed as though her soul would break away from her body. All at once the tempest in her soul was calmed; her agony was gone; she was filled with unutterable joy, and exclaimed, "God has come! God has come! there is no mistake about it; the work is begun, and is going all over this region!"—was that a prophecy, or was it a divine witness? Sure enough, the work had begun. From that very day it went forward like fire consuming the dry stubble, till it had spread over all that region, and multitudes of souls—whose number is recorded only in heaven—were converted to Christ. My brethren, among you may there be many an agonizing soul that shall cry out after God—even the living God!

5. But I must close with one more enumeration

in the catalogue of the rewards of Christian exertion—A MORE GLORIOUS EXALTATION IN HEAVEN.

“Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.” Rev. xxii, 14. It is glorious to enter heaven—to tread the streets of the celestial city—to behold its pearly gates and goodly palaces—to stand upon the banks of the river of the water of life—to pluck the fruit of the tree of life—to look up to the broad, unclouded expanse of those heavens illuminated by the presence of the Lord God and the Lamb—to feel, thrilling all through our veins, the pulsings of a new and unending life—to soar with quickened intellect and go forth to solve the great problems of the universe of God—to look upon, even though it be in the distance, the great army of martyrs and Christian heroes, “who through faith subdued kingdoms,” having “turned to flight the armies of the aliens”—to behold, in unclouded light, the angels, those first-born sons of God—but, above all, to have the whole soul filled, penetrated, etherealized with those emanations of ineffable glory which flow along forever from the Uncreated and the Eternal to the souls of the just made perfect in heaven!

It is glorious, indeed, to be permitted only to enter heaven; infinitely more than any of us do or can deserve. And I wonder not that Christians, penetrated with this humbling consciousness and feeling that they are not worthy even of entering heaven at all—I wonder not that we often hear them say they shall be satisfied with a low seat, some little and



obscure corner in heaven. It is true, my brother, even this is more than you deserve ; but still, if you may have more than this, and if higher glory will come to Christ and higher bliss to yourself by your obtaining more, why should you not strive to obtain more? You are not satisfied with low Christian attainments on earth ; why then should you be satisfied with low attainments in heaven? You are not satisfied with beggarly poverty here, but are ever struggling upward. This is noble, manly. It is a craven, not a humble spirit that would shrink back from the struggle, even though beset by a thousand trials. Why then should we be satisfied with small results in the religious life—whether those results relate to earth or heaven? I fear after all that this is a mistaken humility. For my part, I want all my patrimony ; I want to enjoy the full measure of bliss my Heavenly Father has provided for me ; I want to glorify him by attaining to the full growth of my immortal manhood.

The apostle tells us that even in heaven “one star differeth from another star in glory.” There are degrees in glory—stars of different magnitudes. I look up to our nocturnal sky ; stars without number stud the firmament. But behold, among them stars resplendent—Arcturus with his sons, Orion with its bands, and Sirius with its fervid heat. How they illuminate the heavens! Strike these majestic stars from the firmament, and it would lose half its glory. Just so with the celestial sky

It seems to me I hear a voice from heaven. It calls for stars to gem the celestial firmament. O,

for stars of the *first magnitude* to shine forth in the diadem of the dear Redeemer! Brethren, what response shall we send back? Any stars of the first magnitude being formed here? Any immortal soul thirsting to know all the fullness of God? God grant that stars, stars of the first magnitude, may be transferred, even from this sanctuary, to shine with unclouded brightness in the firmament of heaven forever and ever!

“They that be wise,” says the prophet, “shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever.” Dan. xii, 3. Remember, then, my Christian brother, that your Christian life and labor here is to affect your heavenly life hereafter. The influence of your Christian exertion, no matter how humble the sphere in which it is exercised, no matter how barren of present results it may seem to be, that influence is to run forward along all the line of your eternal being. O, who would not wish to stand by the side of Wesley or of Whitefield and feel the thrill of holy joy they experience as they look down upon the mighty host of their spiritual children, ever increasing in number as the years roll on, and coming up from all lands to swell the triumph of the Redeemer’s reign! O, who would not like to stand by the side of a Watts or of a Charles Wesley, the sweetest songsters of our earthly Zion, and catch the inspiration of those new melodies—more glorious than any ever sung on earth—that burst forth from their immortal tongues, inspiring even the angels of God to tune anew their golden harps to the Redeemer’s

praise! O, who would not like to hold communion with the seraphic Fletcher and the sainted Payson, as amid the blaze of heavenly light, in the presence of the seraphim and the cherubim, the lifting up of their hands in exultant joy is seen!

“A low seat in heaven!” “an obscure and little corner in paradise!” Let us rather struggle for all our heavenly patrimony; let us strive for the full attainment of our immortal manhood. “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.” And in that approaching hour, when life’s labor is done, and your feet are pressing the shore of the dark river, may there come the Divine testimony whispered by angels in your dying ear, to cheer you in the lonely and silent voyage, “He hath done what he could!”

### XIII.

#### REDEMPTION BY THE BLOOD OF CHRIST.

AN ANNIVERSARY DISCOURSE, PREACHED AT THE GARRET BIBLICAL  
INSTITUTE, JUNE 20, 1858.

*“But Christ being come a high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.”* “Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with the blood of others; for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” Heb. ix, 11, 12; 25, 26.

OUR text, though embodying the very marrow of the Gospel, is a mere fragment from one of the most elaborate and convincing discussions of the great Apostle to the Gentiles. In this discussion he brought all the powers of his gigantic intellect—quickened as they were by the inspiration of Heaven—to the elucidation of the relations between the *old* and the *new* dispensations, that he might exalt the preciousness of the redemption of the Gospel. Under the former dispensation there was an altar and a tabernacle made with hands; there was a priesthood chosen from among men; and there were sacrifices offered daily upon the altar, while the high priest, with blood other than his own, entered yearly

into the holy place to make atonement for his own sins and for the sins of the people. Yet all these were inadequate to make him that did the service perfect. The second dispensation also had its altar, its tabernacle, its priest, and its sacrifice; but they were all combined in Him who *once in the end of the world appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself*

The doctrine of redemption by the blood of Christ is a prevailing element of Judaism as well as of Christianity. The types and shadows of the law were only the precursors of "good things to come;" the Temple itself only pointed the way to "a greater and more perfect tabernacle;" the priestly office only to the unchanging priesthood of Christ; the sacrifices offered upon the altar, to "the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all;" and the intercessions of the high priest as he entered the holy of holies to the intercessions of our great High Priest who has entered "into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." So all-pervading, even in the earlier dispensation, is this grand central truth of the Bible—redemption by the blood of Jesus—that no prophet inspired by God looks down through the coming ages, but upon the broad field of his vision, "Immanuel"—*God with us*—appears. This faith was the refuge of God's people in the time of trial, and the most afflicted of them all could say, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." It was also the burden of their song in the day of their triumph and joy. Rapt in the inspiration of this mighty theme, the Psalmist calls upon all the inhabitants of the

earth to come and listen while he proclaims in heavenly strains that "the redemption of the soul is precious."

Does any one inquire why the full dawn of the Gospel day was so long delayed? why the world was suffered to remain so many ages in the dim twilight of Judaism? why, only after the lapse of four thousand years, and "in the end of the world," the great Sacrifice for sin was offered up? This question has perplexed and troubled many an inquiring mind. But, at the very outset, let us observe one fact; and that is this—so far as the efficiency of the atonement is concerned, in its application to the race or to individuals of the race, it mattered not whether it were offered at the very moment of man's fall, or at any subsequent period. From the very first moment of man's first transgression, that atonement was as powerful to save as when, in later ages, extended between heaven and earth, a spectacle to angels and to men, the bleeding victim appeared, a sacrifice for sin.

This being granted, no one can fail to discover reasons for preparation and delay. It was necessary that the sins and sufferings of the race through long ages should demonstrate the deep, deadly, and lasting virulence of man's spiritual disease. It was necessary that the utter failure of all his schemes and efforts for self-amelioration should demonstrate the necessity of help from some higher source. Man himself also was to be developed and brought up to that stage of progress when he might be able to comprehend that which is spiritual, when philosophy and science could investigate, and when art and

history could make a perfect and permanent record of those sublime events that consummated the scheme of Divine mercy. Also preparatory means were necessary, so that when Christ came there might be full authentication of his character and mission. Hence the types and shadows of the law. Hence those sublime and unmistakable predictions of the prophets reaching down through long ages to their fulfillment in the person of Jesus Christ. And hence, indeed, the whole Jewish dispensation; for this was only preparatory to the inauguration of the new and better day. For every sacrifice that smoked on Jewish altars pointed to and was but the precursor of the Great Sacrifice to be offered in the fullness of time once for all. Thus was the law "our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ."

The grand central truth of *all* revelation, then, is redemption by the blood of Christ. All else, whether of art, of science, of philosophy, of poetry, or history, or biography, or the mysterious enunciations of prophecy—all else are subsidiary to this. The thunder, and lightning, and darkness of Sinai are only designed to lead the soul to the milder glories of Calvary and the Cross. Archangel never winged his flight from heaven to earth with a holier message than that which heralded the advent of the Messiah and the redemption of the world. It constitutes at once the foundation of the believer's strength and hope in the time of his pilgrimage, and the song of the blood-washed before the throne of God in heaven.

We propose to discuss the nature, necessity, and

reality of redemption by Jesus Christ. O, that the majesty and glory of the wondrous theme might inspire our faith and fill our souls, that we "may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that we may be filled with all the fullness of God." Ephesians iii, 18, 19.

I. And, first, let us endeavor to define the nature of redemption as ascribed to the blood of Christ.

Redemption implies the recovery of property or of persons by the payment of an equivalent. It involves the *substitution of equivalents*. This substitution of equivalents is seen in all the transactions of society; in the exchange of silver for produce to be had in the market; of gold for land; of service for wages; of fines imposed for trespass; imprisonment for misdemeanor; or death as an expiation for capital offense. As applied to individuals, it is seen where one becomes security for the debts of another, or pays the fine of another, or in any way stands in the place of others to bear their responsibilities. Redemption is perfectly analogous to all this. The debt or penalty is assumed by a third party out of pure compassion or from a friendly desire to aid the condemned, and because the obligation transcends their ability. A son becomes bankrupt—has no means wherewith to pay his debts; the father comes in, assumes the obligation, and cancels the debts. In this transaction the law is vindicated, and the ends of justice secured, though there is an entire substitution of persons.

So among the Jews; if one became impoverished



and parted with his paternal inheritance or his personal liberty, a near kinsman, though in no way held for the debt, might assume it and thus redeem the man or his inheritance. Such is the practical form in which the great work of redemption is symbolized. The ancient Jew redeeming his kinsman was the type; the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven redeeming the soul was the great antitype.

There may be speculative questions growing out of this subject which will puzzle and bewilder the skeptic and the rationalist—questions too deep to be solved by human philosophy. But practically, this is all we need to know. The sinner, conscious of his guilt and condemnation, though he may not be able to comprehend the Divine philosophy of redemption, nevertheless, receiving the great fact that Jesus Christ hath been *set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood,* *for the remission of sins that are past,* he may “be made the righteousness of God in him,” and thus “not perish, but have everlasting life.”

II. But wherein consists the necessity of redemption? It consists, my friends, in the same principle of right and honesty, which forbids your buying without paying, which forbids your taking the property of another without returning an equivalent. Nor are you acquitted when you take that property and squander it, so as to place it out of your power to pay. The self-destruction of either natural or gracious ability can not cancel moral obligation. Else a man might make his very vileness a road to heaven.

But why may not God pardon the sinner of his own clemency, unconditionally, and without redemption? If this shall be the Divine procedure, if God shall do this, why the necessity of law, or penalty, or government at all? Pardon without justification—that is, without vindicating in some way the law—is an abrogation of law. If “the law is holy, just, and good,” the administrator can not voluntarily fail in its administration without impairing his own righteousness. God can not be “just” unless he administer justice. Again, if the law is made void, there is nothing that stands firm. There is no throne left, no authority, nothing to move the conscience, nothing to vindicate right. Under such a system we should lose all sense of obligation and all fear of punishment. All restraints would be removed; all control taken away. The depraved and lawless would scoff at God, and heaven, and purity.

Again, the necessity of redemption by Christ is apparent from the inability of man to make atonement for himself. Redemption implies three things: first, that the offense against the law be removed by satisfying in some way the just demands of that law; secondly, that the injury done to others or the evil produced in the universe by the transgression be remedied; and thirdly, that the disposition or tendency to repeat the offense be removed. Any thing which does not accomplish these three objects falls below the true idea of redemption. But either of these ends is as little within the power of a finite and fallen creature as would be the creation of a world. If a man commits a specific wrong against

his neighbor, and has the *will* and the *ability* to make restitution, he needs the intervention of no third party; he can atone for his own wrong. But if the amount of the wrong exceeds his ability, if he has nothing wherewith to pay, then, without the assistance of some friend able to make restitution, the obligation and the guilt would remain forever uncanceled. The simple question here is, how much does the man owe, and how much is he able to pay? The measure of man's obligation to God as he stood in his unfallen state, was the consecration of *all his powers*, and that *through all time*. Now suppose a man has simply failed to do this, how is it possible for him to make amends for the delinquency? He may resolve to reform, to renew the service of God, to consecrate all his powers to him, but he only does present duty—only does what he would have been obligated to do if he had never sinned. His present obedience, then, in the very nature of things, can never atone for past sin.

I have before me a delicate and important piece of mechanism to be constructed. It will require the entire week, and within that week it is indispensable it should be done. I find a suitable mechanic. He agrees to do the work—that is, for a specified compensation, he comes under obligation to devote to my service the entire week. But when the first working day of the week comes, my workman does not appear. The day wears away; it is gone, and the work is not commenced. By this delinquency the man has not only broken his obligation, and forfeited his contract, but he has placed it absolutely

out of his power ever to fulfill the terms of that contract. He may come the second day and continue to the last, but the rendition of *five* days instead of *six* after all leaves him with obligations unfulfilled. It is well he has done so much, but this can never atone for what he has not done. Such is the condition of the sinner. His whole life consecrated to God, at all times and to the full extent of his powers, was what he owed to God. But, alas! how large a portion of that life has been spent! Say you now, when but a hundredth part remains, with that you will redeem the whole? Go to your creditor when you have squandered the ninety and nine and offer him the hundredth dollar of his claim. Will he accept it and cancel your obligations? Nay, verily, he may accept the hundredth, but he will sternly inquire, "Where are the ninety and nine?"

Nor is this all. Let me state a common fact. You loan a sum of money. At the end of the year you claim not only the capital loaned, but also the interest; to the one your claim is as just as to the other. So God has made us capable of improvement. Every virtuous deed tends to enlarge the soul's capacity, thus perpetually increasing our capabilities of more glorious and exalted service. All this is due to God. But what is the condition of the sinner? A debtor, he not only fails to render interest, but even the principal has been squandered in his hands, till, alas! it is nearly all wasted and gone.

But even this is not all. Perhaps my recreant workman has spent the day in dissipation, and when

he comes, after his waste of time, to the place and work agreed upon, his nervous system is so shaken that he is no longer competent to perform the work. Here, then, is an additional and insurmountable obstacle in the way of his meeting his obligations. So is it, also, with the sinner. Sin has polluted the soul, enfeebled its powers, and darkened its spiritual vision. There is now not only legal condemnation, but spiritual disability. Tell me that such a being can atone for himself, can heal himself? As well might you expect the leopard to cleanse his spots, or the Ethiopian to change his skin!

To crown the whole of this difficulty, the sinner lacks the *disposition*, even if he had the power, to amend his ways. Having once departed from God, there is no disposition to return. All his tendencies are to go farther and still farther away. Such is the universal law every-where manifest. The fire that has seized upon the dwelling has of itself no tendency *to go out* but *to burn up*. The planet which has burst away from its orbit has no tendency to come back, but rather to fly still farther into the distant regions of space. The tendency of a disease of the body is to the destruction of that body. So, also, the inevitable tendency of spiritual disease is to the destruction of the soul. The very laws which crown obedience with life and blessing visit disobedience with wrath and destruction.

But even yet we have not probed this difficulty to the bottom. The influence of sin is not restricted to the sinner. Man is not isolated. He is a part of a great system, and the influence of his action

extends to other creatures, affecting their lives, and characters, and destinies to an untold extent. If, then, he would atone for his sins he must not only recover himself to perfect obedience, and repair the evil done to his own moral nature by sin, but he must go beyond this; he must in some adequate and ostensible form make compensation for the evil he has done to the moral universe of God.

Were God to justify the sinner on any grounds short of these, it would undermine the very foundations of his moral government in the universe. But how impossible is it for the sinner to fulfill these conditions! He might as well attempt to scale heaven by a rope of sand, or by piling mountain upon mountain to the skies. Nay, as well might he attempt to pluck down Omnipotence itself.

How then, sinner, wilt thou escape? Become obedient and penitent if you will; but, O, who shall claim for thee forgiveness of sins that are past? who shall restore thy lost brightness and purity of soul? who shall trace back thy devious path, search out and cancel all the hidden evil influences that have flowed out from thee, and for long years have been poisoning the virtue and ruining the souls of men? who shall make compensation for the wrong done to the whole moral universe of God by thy rebellion; who shall heal the deadly malady of thine own soul? Thanks be unto God, there is help and hope; for *when we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.*

Thus are we brought back, by the very convictions of reason and by the necessities of our

condition, to the all-glorious truth that *Christ Jesus died to save sinners.*

III. We have endeavored to show the nature and the necessity of redemption. We come now to the question of its reality.

No one can have failed to notice the early and distinct recognition, in the Bible, of sacrifice—of shedding blood as an atonement for sin. Even in the time of Moses it was declared, “*For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.*” Lev. xvii, 11. Seven hundred years before the Savior came, in prophetic anticipation, it is said, “*He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*” Isa. liii, 5, 6. His life was “made an offering for sin;” he “bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.” What is this but the poetry of redemption, gushing forth from the sublimest of all the bards of Israel as his rapt soul surveyed the vision of Calvary and the cross?

But if Isaiah, in his burning periods, gives us the poetry of redemption, St. Paul gives us its logic in words that glow and burn with intensest ardor—“Being freely justified by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness; that

he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Rom. iii, 24-26. Analyze this logic. Jesus Christ is "set forth"—publicly proclaimed before angels and men—as a *propitiation*, and thus he declares the righteousness of God. For if the law is vindicated; if compensation—full and adequate—is made in the moral universe of God for guilty man's infraction of its order, surely the righteousness of God is maintained, while at the same time his mercy and his long-suffering forbearance are manifested. It is not through the teaching, the example, the wisdom, the power, but through "the redemption that is in Christ Jesus," that we have justification and eternal life. "For when we were without strength"—when we were without power to make atonement for ourselves; "in due time"—when all the schemes of human wisdom for the amelioration of the race had been tested and failed, and four thousand years of sin and suffering had demonstrated the deadly nature of man's spiritual disease—"Christ died for the ungodly."

Nor does the apostle leave us in doubt when, and where, and how the work of redemption was consummated by Christ. The Jewish high priest entered the holy place *with blood other than his own*—with the blood of bulls and of calves, "for every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices;" wherefore it was also necessary that "this man"—*our* high priest, who is now passed into the heavens—should "have somewhat also to offer;" "wherefore, when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared



me," and hence "he bore our sins in his own body on the tree." Nor was it necessary "that he should offer himself often, for then must he have often suffered since the foundation of the world ; but now, once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Thus was Jesus made the surety of a better "testament ;" thus hath he "an unchangeable priesthood," and needeth not daily, like the high priest, to offer up sacrifices for the sins of the people ; "for this he did once, when he offered up himself." When the Jewish priest had fulfilled his mission, he died and was gathered to his fathers ; his functions as a priest then ceased, and he could make atonement for sins no more. "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sin, forever sat down at the right hand of God ;" he entered "into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." In the light of this Divine philosophy we can comprehend why the apostle should say, "ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price"—I Cor. vi, 19, 20 ; and also why another apostle should give intensity to the value of that redemption—"ye are not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ"—I Pet. i, 18, also the depth and comprehensive significance of that utterance of Divinity, as he lays the bleeding victim upon the altar, "I have found a ransom."

But, my brethren, to cut short this line of argument, let us notice the significant fact, that among the titles applied to Christ, is that of *redeemer*. Did you ever fully comprehend the significance of this

simple fact? Whatever other terms of honor or dignity might be applicable to him, this title could not be unless he filled the office and performed the functions of a redeemer. If he taught the people, we might speak of him as our teacher; if he gave us an example in all moral purity, we might call him our example. But unless he has paid a redemption-price and performed an act of redemption, we could not call him our redeemer.

The fact that this title is applied to Christ by Divine authority—the fact that he is styled *Redeemer*, taken especially in connection with the illustrations of the redemption act contained in the Bible itself, is utterly inexplicable on any other ground than that the Savior actually filled the office and performed the functions of a redeemer. This simple fact rises to the majesty of demonstration. In truth, the titles of Christ are all significant of his office. Is he called “Shiloh?” it is because he was sent forth—the apostle of God. Is he called “Immanuel?” it is because he is God with us. Is he called “Fountain?” it is because all the springs of salvation find their source in him. Is he called “the Tree of Life?” it is because upon his branches fruit is borne for the healing of the nations. Is he “the Bread of Life?” it is because he is that bread which came down from heaven, of which, if a man eat, he shall live and not die. Is he called the “Corner-Stone,” and the “Foundation?” it is because other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, Jesus Christ being the chief corner-stone. Is he called the “Bridegroom?” it is because the Church, all glorious in her

brightness and purity, has been espoused by him. Is he called a "Sun?" it is because he shines away our darkness. A "Shield?" it is because he is the protector of his people. A "Potentate?" it is because all power, in heaven and in earth, has been committed to him, and he is the Lord of lords and the King of kings. Is he called the "Resurrection?" it is because he hath burst the bars of death, ascended victorious from the tomb, and become the first-fruits of them that slept. And is he also called a "Redeemer?" it is because now once in the end of the world he hath appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

What a mine of glorious truth, then, do we find hidden in a single word! The cross, the atonement, the intercession, the heavenly triumph—all are imbedded here. All that is wondrous in the manifestations of Divine mercy, all that is glorious in the hope and the deliverance of the sinner, and all that is mysterious—exciting the wonder and challenging the search of angels—in the reconciliation of man to God, shine forth in this appellation of Christ so expressive of his office and work. It was the announcement of Jesus as the Redeemer of a lost and ruined race of mortals that tuned the lyres of angels to a new and sweeter melody. Redemption is the key-note of the mighty anthem of praise to God and the Lamb sung by the innumerable multitude of the just made perfect in heaven. Thanks be to God that Jesus comes bearing this badge of his office upon his very front, that I may recognize him not only as my prophet and my king, but also as my

*Redeemer!* No high-sounding title by which his praise is hymned among the thrones of heaven can ever be so precious to the ransomed sinner as that which breaks his fetters, removes his guilt, and lifts him up on high. Redeemer and redemption!—it is the very music of the skies, floating down from heaven and breaking on the ear of mortals. Angels commenced the song, but mortals have learned the strain, and, like the voice of many waters, it rolls down through all ages and out over all lands. Onward shall it roll till all its heavenly melodies become blended in the sublime anthem of the redeemed in heaven.

When the Greeks heard of the overthrow of the Macedonian invader, the whole nation, it is said, sent up a shout—*Σωτηρ! Σωτηρ!*—Savior! Savior!—so loud that the birds flying through the air fell down as though they were shot. What was fable with the delivered Greek should become fact with the redeemed sinner. “Redeemer! Redeemer!” let the mighty shout ring through earth and sky. “Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb!”

“All hail the power of Jesus’ name!  
Let angels prostrate fall;  
Bring forth the royal diadem,  
And crown him Lord of all!”

Thus do we find redemption by the blood of Christ to be not only the all-pervading truth of all revelation, but the grand end for which all revelation is made. It was the star of hope that arose in the promise of God upon the moral darkness of our

world when it was desolated and ruined by sin. It was the great theme of the ancient prophets and the burden of every prophecy. The symbols and types of Judaism heralded this coming redemption. It was imbedded in the faith of the holy men of old; it burst forth in the melody of their sacred songs, inspiring them with a power all divine. The scenes of Calvary and the cross, the resurrection from the dead, the tongue of fire that not only crowned the apostles but glowed in their ministry, the triumphs of Christianity, the believer's victory over sin and death, and the mighty song of the redeemed in heaven—all proclaim that "this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." 1 Timothy i, 15. This is the truth above all others pregnant with hope to sinful and sorrowing humanity.

What matters it though the skeptic and the unbeliever scoff at this truth! What though the self-sufficient pretender, who makes his own clouded intellect the gauge and standard of all truth, rejects it! What though the caviler should cover it all over with difficulties and objections which neither his nor my feeble intellect has power to solve! Coming as it does with the warrant of Almighty God for its truth, heralded to earth as it was by angels, enthroned as it is in the life and death of Jesus, breathing as it does a Divine life into the soul, thus bearing the impress of the Divinity in its origin and the seal of the Godhead in its fruits, I can not, I will not doubt its truth. It reaches up to heaven. Its philosophy is that of God and not of

man; its power is infinite as its virtue is exhaustless. Angels in vain strive to penetrate its mysteries and comprehend its glories.

“It is the science and song of eternity.”

And in the ages of coming eternity, when thrones shall have crumbled and kingdoms passed away, when the earth itself shall be almost forgotten amid the dim and receding recollections of the past, then shall the great mystery of Calvary and the cross be still the theme of our wonder and the burden of our song.

Though I have already detained you long, yet I can not close without bringing the subject more directly home to ourselves in a few practical remarks.

1. *And, first, we have here a most glorious and endearing revelation of God.* There are wondrous exhibitions of the character of God in the works of nature. He “setteth forth the mountains, being girded with power;” he “stretcheth out the heavens like a curtain,” and “walketh upon the wings of the wind.” But I see not his glory revealed in nature as it is revealed in Christ. We might have ranged the vastness of creation forever, and sounded all the mysteries of divine Providence, without ever learning that truth—all important to our guilty consciousness—whether there is forgiveness with the Most High; whether God is placable; and, in fine, whether God is approachable! But here, in this sublime mystery of redemption—in front of all, and towering high above all—we find that wonder of angels and

paradox of mortals—*God manifest in the flesh!* He comes down, so to speak, into personal sympathy with humanity; he is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. Through this divine channel he pours the full and brimming tide of his compassion around all the misery of a wrecked and ruined world. Nay, he comes into our very hearts—once so filled with all enmity and vileness—and becomes there a fountain of purity and love, springing up unto eternal life. This is the revelation of God most needed by the soul; the revelation of his beauty, his truth, his love. It is the revelation of his mercy; the unbosoming of his compassion. It is not only God revealed, but it is God revealed through man, so that we might comprehend the depth and power of his sympathy, and take shelter for our guilty souls in the bosom of his love. It is God so identifying himself with our race as to demonstrate the possible union and identification of our nature with his in the elements of purity and felicity O! what a revelation of God is this! The Infinite coming down into fellow-sympathy with the finite that it might be drawn up into himself! Almighty power coalescing with infinite weakness that it might be made strong; the garnered storehouse of eternity pouring out its opulence to supply the destitute and perishing; mercy—such as dwells only in the bosom of God—spreading her snowy wing over the dark scene of human sin and suffering that the defenseless victim might have deliverance and salvation. Thus, my brethren, would I ever have God revealed to me; not as when his voice was uttered from the midst of the black darkness of

Sinai, with vivid flash of lightning and terrific peal of thunder, but I would hide me in the cleft of the everlasting Rock, that as the Lord passed by I might, with Moses, hear his voice proclaiming, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin." Ex. xxxiv, 6, 7.

2. *We have a method of salvation adapted to the condition and wants of the sinner.* Wherever the consciousness of sin exists in our universal nature, there exists along with that consciousness its essential counterpart—a desire for its mitigation; or, in other words, there is a conscious need of deliverance, of atonement—or, as we may express it, *at-one-ment*, which is simply *reconciliation with God*. This *at-one-ment* implies, first, *pardon*—full, free, and perfect—by which the legal obstructions to a union with God are taken out of the way; second, *moral renovation* of the soul, by which it is restored to the image of God, and the obstruction to its salvation growing out of its diseased moral nature is removed; third, *compensation* for the injury done in the moral universe of God. On no condition short of this could reconciliation with God be effected. Our very consciousness of right demands that God shall not require less. Redemption, then, becomes necessary to atonement. Had Christ come only as our teacher, to tell us what we ought to do; as our example after which we should pattern in all purity and love; had he come as such only, his mission must have proved a failure, and black ruin and despair must have settled down



upon our race forever ; for man, hearing and seeing, would still be without power to obey the precepts or to imitate the example of the Savior. But, thanks be to God, "when we were without strength, in due time, Christ died for the ungodly !"

"Jesus, thy blood, thy blood alone,  
Hath power sufficient to atone."

Nothing besides this could insure the forgiveness of the least and fewest of our sins. No other element has virtue. No voice from hight or depth could say with authority to the least transgressor, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." No fasting or penance, no absolution of priest or indulgence of Pope could reach up to the seat of the soul's disease.

Go to the awakened, conscience-smitten sinner ; go to him when sleep departs from his eyes, when the groan of anguish is wrung from his breast, when the stillness of the night is disturbed by his moaning and he wraps himself in sackcloth and bows down in the dust before God ! How will you assuage his distress ? how will you lighten the burden of his condemnation ? will you offer the pleasures of sense, of intellect, of the imagination ? "Alas," he will say, "I have already tasted them and know their emptiness." Will you say to him that Christ Jesus, though a man only, was nevertheless the embodiment of all that is excellent in humanity ; was a man of sorrows and sympathy—a heavenly light and a divine instructor ? "Alas," he will exclaim, "what can instructions, light, or example avail me ? It is *help* that I want, *HELP*, such as only a God can give."

Will you attempt to allay his horrors by pleading that his sins have not been great, and that he may make amends for them? With an indignation bordering almost upon despair, he will exclaim, "My sins not great! to my Heavenly Father I have been ungrateful and disobedient; I have been rebellious as a subject; a candidate for heaven, I have pursued the road to hell. My nature is all darkness, my soul all defilement; O, who shall deliver me from the body of this death! who shall save me from ruin forever!" Plead with him that though he has been

ungrateful and rebellious, others have been still more so; that though he has been sinful, he is not as bad as they. O, that look of anguish and despair, while he exclaims, "O that I could have the conduct of others thrown into the scales as the standard by which I am to be weighed! It might be some alleviation to my misery, some mitigation of my guilt, some lightening of the intolerable burden that now weighs me down. But, alas! it is not so. God's holy law is the standard of my duty, and below it I have fallen immeasurably. It requires purity, and, alas for me! I am all polluted and depraved." Plead with

him, again, the goodness of God. "Ah," he will exclaim, "it is against goodness, immaculate, infinite goodness that I have sinned. Had the Almighty been cruel and not good, it would have been some alleviation to the feelings of remorse that now rend me. But I see, I feel that God is just; and in his justice, with fearfulness and trembling, I read my approaching, my inevitable doom!" But still again, plead with the wretched man that if he

repents, his *repentance* shall avert the Divine vengeance and suspend the execution of the Divine law. "O might this be so," he will exclaim, "I would pour out my tears of sorrow and bemoan my iniquity. But, alas! can *tears* atone for transgression? will tears of anguish repair a shattered constitution or restore a wasted fortune? will they avert even the temporal judgments of God? and if not, how can they avert his just and eternal judgment against it? Nay, will repentance avert the execution of even human laws; will the felon, the murderer escape punishment because he repents? How, then, shall repentance acquit him who has trampled under foot the law of his God?" Driven, like a false comforter, to the last extremity, will you now disclose the dark creed of infidelity, and assure the trembling sinner that there is no God, and therefore no moral accountability, or guilt, or punishment? He will reply, "As for a God, I know that nothing but an Almighty could inflict what I now feel!"

What remedy shall we now devise for the dying sinner? Every step we have heretofore taken has only involved him still deeper in despair; every remedy we have proposed has only served to show the hopelessness of his condition. How shall the guilty find pardon? Where shall the weary find rest? Reason, philosophy, nature—all are silent. It is now, in the midst of our darkness and despair, that the great sacrifice for sin appears. The bleeding victim is all Divine—at once *my God and my sacrifice*. As I gaze upon this sacrifice there comes down a voice whose deep and holy tones thrill the soul with

unutterable emotion—"Live, for I have found a ransom." O what power in that word! The fetters of sin that bound the soul are all snapped asunder. Upward it flies on wings divine; and as it ascends the joyful song of triumph peals out—

"My God is reconciled,  
His pardoning voice I hear;  
He owns me for his child;  
I shall no longer fear.  
The Spirit answers to the blood,  
And tells me I am born of God."

3. *Again, this theme is eminently worthy of universal proclamation.* Angels heralded it from the skies. The minstrelsy of Zion and the eloquence of inspiration gave proclamation to it as the ages rolled onward to its completion. The blood of the immaculate and only-begotten Son of God sealed it upon the cross of Calvary. The problem of ages—that mysterious problem which so long constituted the burden of the soul's agony—that difficult problem of eternity which neither priest, nor prophet, nor angel could unlock—is now solved, and God can be just and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. The condemned may find pardon; the dead may live.

Were some fortunate explorer to discover the real *elixir of life* by which life, and health, and youth might be made perpetual, with what shouts of triumph and songs of joy would the discovery be heralded forth! Friend would rush to bear the glad tidings to friend; onward, and still onward, over hill and mountain, across valley and plain would the joyful tidings roll, till no solitary denizen of earth, be

his dwelling never so remote or concealed, but what had been made to know that death should reign no more. My brethren! Death shall reign no more. Jesus Christ hath "abolished death;" in his hands he holds "the keys of hell and of death;" and to his followers, every-where, he proclaims with all the omnipotence of the Godhead, "As I live, ye shall live also!" Let the glorious truth, then, receive universal proclamation; let the glad tidings fall upon the expectant ears and gladden the sorrowing hearts of all lands. Let the wandering Indian in his native wilds; let the tawny African in his dark jungles and squalid abodes; let the wandering tribes that roam amid the regions of perpetual ice and snow; let the dweller on the most distant isle that dots the farthest ocean—let one and all hear the glad news that LIFE—LIFE IMMORTAL, has come down to earth! Yes, let the proclamation of this truth spread and widen till degraded and sorrowing humanity, every-where, shall be quickened to life and filled with joy.

"Waft, waft ye winds, the story,  
And you, ye waters, roll,  
Till, like a sea of glory,  
It spreads from pole to pole;  
Till o'er our ransomed nature,  
The Lamb for sinners slain,  
Redeemer, King, Creator,  
In bliss returns to reign."

4. Finally, my brethren, whom I especially address at this time, let me exhort you to *make this the grand theme of your future ministry*. The science of salvation includes every other science; it makes

every other tributary to this. Let the Christian minister, then, explore all the fields of natural and experimental science. Their research shall be rewarded by many a rich gem of truth, which, polished by the hand of piety, shall sparkle even in the fair crown of Christianity. History, too, and letters shall speak eloquently of God and of Christ. The rays of truth, whether from science, from history, from literature, or from revelation, shall blend in glorious harmony encircling with a halo of transcendent brightness the Cross of Christ. Bring your *hearts* into contact with the sublime power of redemption. Let it be to you a living, indwelling reality—a vital essence grafted into your very being; then will you have the great, the indispensable equipment for your work. You will preach not uncertainly as one that beateth the air, but in demonstration of the Spirit and with power.

As often as Antæus in Grecian fable could touch the soil from which he sprung, he received new and mighty strength, so that even Hercules could not strangle him without lifting him up from the earth. So, my brethren, as you grapple with sin and death, touch the soil of Calvary. From that sacred contact you shall receive new inspiration and spring with renovated power. But let the pride of learning and of false philosophy lift you above the Cross, and the Hercules of infidelity, and sin, and bewildering speculation will strangle you in his grasp. You are not to ape the philosopher, but preach the Cross. You are not to preach sermons made attractive by their beauty, but impressive by their power. In a word, redemption, not merely in its letter, but in its

spirit and power, is to be the Alpha and the Omega of all your ministrations.

Does any one ask, "How shall we always preach Christ?" Let me answer that question and then I will close. The best direction I can give, and one that covers the whole ground, is, *live in him*. Or, to use the language of one\* not always so clearly apprehending the spirit and truth of Christ: "To know Jesus Christ and him only, to die with him in his death and rise in the likeness of his resurrection, to have Christ living in us, life within life, to have his pure spirit breathing in us, to love with his love, to be consciously and eternally united to God by our union with Christ, to know that nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord, and in that confidence to be ready to partake joyfully of his passion, and to become obedient with him even unto death—this, I say, is *to know how to preach Christ unto men*. For it is not a rhetoric, not a philosophy; it is nothing that the schools can teach or the natural understanding learn, but it is the living, life-giving experience of Christ himself. Study cleared by communion, knowledge grounded in faith—this it is which prepares insight, character, and love, and forms the true equipment of an earnest, powerful preacher. Having this, a man will preach not by words only, his very life will be luminous, because Christ is manifested in it! With such a man, such a Christian minister, abides the Lord's good promise, not in some external, official, occasional manner, but in the

\* Horace Bushnell.

heart, in depth of feeling, in clearness of spirit, in wisdom, patience, and power—‘Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world!’”

Blessed is he who has this consciousness of the Divine presence and this power of the indwelling life. Happy are ye, brethren, if ye shall so live and labor for Christ. “Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy rearward.”



## XIV.

## ON REVIVALS OF RELIGION.

*"And they of Beth-shemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley: and they lifted up their eyes, and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see it."* 1 Samuel vi, 13.

THE event narrated in our text refers to a remarkable period in the history of God's ancient people. Eli had for a long time been judge over the land. He appears to have been a God-fearing man himself, but like too many parents in the present day, he was too lenient to control his sons, and too indulgent to correct or punish their vices. The result of this excessive indulgence was as natural as it was painful. Hophni and Phineas, though they ministered at the altar, were men of most abandoned and profligate characters. They were guilty of the grossest vices. The swift poison of their wickedness was diffused among the people. The great mass of them not only became corrupt in morals, but carried that corruption to the very altars of God. The few who retained their piety, shocked at this mockery of religion, and disgusted with the corruptions of the priests, refrained from coming to the house of the Lord. And thus the total neglect of religion, or its utter perversion, prevailed to an alarming degree.

God did not long suffer this state of things to continue. Young Samuel, though yet a lad, now ministered before Eli in the house of the Lord. The eyes of Eli had become dim with age, and "there was no open vision"—that is, no accredited prophet in all the land. At this juncture, when the whole land was reeking with wickedness and irreligion, God called unto Samuel and revealed unto him all that should befall the house of Eli. And when the old man heard the evil that should come upon him because he restrained not the iniquity of his sons, he bowed his hoary head in anguish and said, "It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good."

The Philistines are made the instruments of God's vengeance upon his sinning people. They arrayed themselves in battle against Israel at Ebenezer. Israel is defeated, and retires, leaving four thousand dead upon the field. When the day was ended they counseled over their defeat. But instead of repenting of their sins, and recognizing their iniquities as the cause of their overthrow, they send to Shiloh and bring to the battle-field the ark of God, accompanied by the two priests, Hophni and Phineas.

When the ark appeared in the midst of the camp all the people shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang, and the Philistines trembled with affright. But what can the empty ceremonies of religion do if God be not there? Israel is again discomfited with tremendous slaughter. Thirty thousand men were left dead upon the field of battle, and to crown their calamity, Hophni and Phineas, their priests, were both slain, and the ark of the Lord fell

into the hands of the Philistines. When the sad news of these calamities was brought to Shiloh, the whole city cried out with anguish; and the aged and pious, though mistaken, Eli fell down by the side of the gate and expired.

Elated with their success, the Philistines carry home the ark of the Lord in triumph, and place it in the house of Dagon, their god, in the city of Ashdod. But their triumph was soon checked by the mysterious prostration of Dagon before the ark. The inhabitants of the city are also smitten with sore disease, till, terrified, they demand the removal of the ark from their city. Then it is carried to Gath; but behold, pestilence and death go with it! And when they would have sent it to Ekron, another city, all its inhabitants rose up in alarm and besought that it might not come among them. Thus, after seven months, the Philistines consulted how they might return the ark of the Lord to the land of Israel.

At the instance of their priests, they inclose a trespass-offering of gold in a coffer, which, along with the ark, was placed upon a cart, drawn by milch kine. Left to their own guidance, they went up from the land of the Philistines, without turning either to the right or left, till they came to Beth-shemesh, a city of the priests, near the borders of Judea. And the inhabitants of the city were gathering their wheat harvest in the valley, and, "lifting up their eyes, they saw the ark of the Lord returning, and rejoiced to see it."

This whole subject is eminently suggestive in its application to the Israel of God. Here the loss of

the Divine presence in the Church is typified by the loss of the ark of the Lord; and the causes that led to the loss of that ark strikingly illustrate the causes of spiritual decline in the Church of God. The return of that ark to Israel symbolizes the return of the spiritual presence to the Church; and as the return of the ark filled the hearts of the Israelites with joy, so the people of God ever rejoice in the returning manifestations of the Divine presence and glory.

I know not what theme is more pertinent to the present occasion or of greater interest to the Church in the present crisis of her history and work than that suggested by our text—the presence and favor of God in Zion, or *a deep, earnest, spiritual, all-pervading revival of religion.*

What is the great want of the Church at the present hour? She has, perhaps, her full share of wealth and social influence, and even political power; she has infolded among her agencies learning, and talent, and piety in the ordinary acceptation of that word. She is active in her educational enterprises, in building her churches, and in sending forth her missionaries. In all material and intellectual resources she abounds. It seems to me, then, that her great want, the gift that is to crown and ennoble all her other endowments, is the baptism of the Holy Spirit, like that experienced on the day of Pentecost, like that often realized in great, and mighty, and sweeping revivals of religion—an inspiration that makes the soul glow with light, and love, and power.

Let us, then, look at some of the characteristics,

causes, agencies, and effects of such revivals of religion. Let us prayerfully consider the importance of such a revival, and thoughtfully inquire whether we, whether the whole Church, may not expect it, and expect it *now!* And if it may be realized in the Church, let us inquire what human instrumentalities may be employed to bring it about, what *we ourselves* may do toward realizing this grand result. And O, brethren, let us wait to-day *in holy expectation*, just as the disciples of old waited in the upper chamber while the day of Pentecost was coming on!

I. What, then, is a revival of religion? It will be sufficient to characterize it as *an extraordinary spiritual manifestation*.

The word *revival* is from *re* and *vivo*, meaning simply to live again. It conveys an idea of restoration from death to life. This is its primary signification. When Elijah prayed for the restoration of the widow's son to life, "the Lord heard the voice of Elijah, and the soul of the child came into him again, and he *revived*." 1 Kings xvii, 22. The prophet seems to have been wholly uninstructed in that modern philosophy which teaches that the soul dies with the body. He prays not that this child's soul may be restored to life, but that it may "come into him again." God heard the prayer, and the living soul of the child returned into the dead body, so that it lived again. So, also, of the dead man, whose corpse, on being thrown hastily into the tomb of Elisha, touched the bones of the prophet. He instantly "*revived*." That is, he was restored to life, "and stood upon his feet."

By a sort of figure of speech, it has come to mean a quickening or invigoration. And in this sense it is often applied to external and even material interests. Thus we speak of the revival of learning, the revival of business, or of commerce. It is used also to indicate recovery from bodily disease. A person wasted by sickness, emaciated, enfeebled, is said to be *reviving* when the returning glow of health is seen. So if a person has fallen into a swoon or fainting-fit, he is said to *revive* as he apparently comes back to life. It is employed also to express deliverance from despondency of feeling, the fainting of heart, occasioned by misfortune or apprehended evil. When the sons of the patriarch "told him, saying, Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt, Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not." But when they told him the words of Joseph, and when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, "the spirit of Jacob their father *revived*."

From these examples may be seen the aptness of this word as applied to the spiritual reinvigoration or quickening of soul, which we have characterized as an extraordinary spiritual manifestation. When an individual Christian has declined in the spiritual life, lost the fervor of his zeal, grown cold in love, become neglectful of religious duties, fallen into wayward if not sinful habits, and then, by repentance and faith, is once more restored to the favor of God, he is said to be "revived in religion." And so, also, a whole Church sometimes declines in the spiritual life; its sympathies are chilled, its energies become

dormant, the ways of Zion mourn, and the life of God seems dying out in all the membership. Let such a Church be quickened anew into the Divine life, let the fountains of salvation be opened in her midst, let the fruit of the tree of life cluster in rich abundance again upon her branches, and then what word can more fitly express the change than *revival*? That Church *lives again*.

But there are extraordinary manifestations of religion; when the entire community is awakened, and religion itself seems to possess and exert unwonted power. Then we speak of the great and extraordinary spiritual manifestation as *a revival of religion*.

And this brings us to the fact, that the movements of Christianity are not uniform in the world. Its history does not present any steady and unvarying line of advance. There are great epochs of revival, standing out as prominent headlands to mark the progress of religion in the earth. And each of these epochs has been preceded by its Winter of spiritual decline, in which every germ of piety seemed girt about with ice and snow, and faith had well-nigh perished from among men.

Why these ebbings and flowings in religion? Does it result from the infirmity of human nature? from the fickleness and variableness of man? or is it a part of the Divine economy, inhering in the Gospel as a system designed for the elevation and redemption of the race? These are points we may not fully discuss in this connection. But if we look into nature, in her corresponding analogies, we find that dead uniformity is not the law of her movement.

We may not see any reason why sufficient water to moisten the earth and quicken vegetation should not daily and with uniformity descend from the clouds or be deposited from the atmosphere. But it is not so. How often does the protracted drought waste the earth till it becomes dry and parched, and vegetation is withered! Then, again, the clouds pour out themselves as though they would deluge the very earth; and the hopes of men are swept away by the floods. We do not attempt to give the philosophy of all these things; we deal only with the facts as they appear in the current of the religious life.

Let us push the thought a little further. Nature has its dread Winter. The earth is sheeted with snow and belted with ice. Vegetation seems dead and buried; yet nature is simply resting. She shall come forth in the Spring, with invigorated power, to clothe the earth with new life and beauty. We will not say that the Church *gathers* strength in the Winter of her spiritual decline; but we do know that, warmed and invigorated by the returning heat, she shall send forth the exultant song: "Lo, the Winter is past, the rain is over and gone: the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land." Song of Sol. ii, 11, 12.

There are times when the tide of Christianity seems to be turned backward, and the world seems to be waxing worse and worse. When our eye runs along the line of a great river, we come to points where the current is obstructed, and the surface is broken into eddies, till the whole stream seems to be



turned backward. That is only the surface view. The deep water of the mighty river is all the while rolling onward, and hasting to pour its ever-increasing volume into the boundless ocean below. So also, notwithstanding those discouraging surface views that sometimes distract our faith and appall our hearts, the deep undercurrent of Christianity is really moving onward; and the fact shall be demonstrated to our sight, by and by, when, in the clear light of a brighter revelation, we comprehend more of the design and work of God.

Such are the phases of the natural world, under the curses sin has entailed upon it. So these great spiritual upheavings are the special intervention of Heaven to save the Church and the world from utter ruin. And it is a fact, patent in the history of the Church and worthy of careful note, that nearly all the progress religion has made in the earth has been made through the agency of these great, wide-spread, and glorious revivals. They are the great tidal waves that lift our humanity up, and bear it onward toward the higher and grander development of its spiritual life.

II. Our second remark is that *God is the author of such spiritual manifestations.*

The residue of the Spirit is with God, and the gift of the Spirit is from God. A revival that does not spring from this source will lack the essential characteristics of a work of God in its progress, and the essential fruits of such a work in its results.

The Jews had two such revivals. Let us learn a lesson from them. The first took place after the

spies came back from the promised land, bringing their evil report. Then the people murmured against God and against Moses, and said, "Wherefore hath the Lord brought us into this land to fall by the sword?" And then they charge God with the special injustice and cruelty of bringing up their wives and their children to be a prey to their enemies. And they say one to another, "Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt." God said to Moses, I will destroy this people. But Moses interceded with God in mighty, fervent, and believing prayer. And for the encouragement of the people of God in all ages, it is placed upon record that that prayer prevailed with the Most High. It did not exhaust its power upon Moses, according to the refined theory of modern skeptics, but *it moved God*. He spares the rebellious people. But he says, I will turn them back into the wilderness forty years; a year for each day shall they wander, and their carcasses shall perish in the wilderness. But their little children, whom they said I purposed to destroy, shall be brought into the promised land.

When Moses reported to the people this sentence, they were filled with dismay. And at early morning they came to Moses and said: Go thou up with us, and we will now go up and fight the enemy. But Moses said, ye can not go up, for God is not with you. Yet they persisted; and though Moses and the ark of the covenant remained in the camp, they went up in hot and impudent haste against their enemies. The result was just what might have been expected. The Amalekites and the Canaanites came down from

the mountains, fell upon them, smote and discomfited them, pursuing them back even to Hormah.

How perfectly parallel this to the course of some backsliders in modern times! After having not only neglected the duties of religion, but dishonored the Church by their wayward if not scandalous life, anon something gets hold of their feelings; they awake from their deadness, and, without waiting to wash away the taint of their apostasy, they seem to imagine that it is their special function to become leaders in Israel. They become impatient at the slowness of the Church which has been so long patient toward them, and propose at once to go up and fight the battles of the Lord. Not so, ye unstable, fickle-minded men. God requires a different kind of material out of which to bring forth champions for his cause.

The second revival of this kind among the Jews was that in the time of Eli. The first day's defeat, when four thousand are left dead upon the field of battle, shocks and alarms the people. But instead of putting away their sins and humbling themselves before God, they put their trust in the outward forms and ceremonies of religion. They bring up the ark, call forth the priest, and seem to imagine that this outward display of religious ceremony shall give them the victory. In the time of Moses the ark went not up. *Now* they have the ark—the outward form—in the very midst of the camp. They are exultant in their presumptuous joy, as though the battle had already been fought and the victory won. But, alas! what can the outward form and the

pompous ceremonial effect without the Divine indwelling and favor? Defeat, wide-spread, disastrous, and appalling, follows. The plain is strewed with the dead, the priests are among the slain, and the ark—the very symbol of their faith—is taken captive and carried away.

So ends every revival that has not God for its author; so goes out every fire of mere human kindling. Ashes only will remain. Bishop Butler, the author of the celebrated Analogy of Natural and Revealed Religion to the Constitution and Course of Nature—a citadel of strength for the defense of the Christian faith, against which infidelity has leveled its heaviest artillery for a hundred years in vain—mourning over the decay of vital religion, the wide-spread corruption in morals, and the almost utter neglect of the public worship of God, in 1750, sent out a circular to the preachers in his diocese. His lament over the decay of religion is eloquent and touching. But when he comes to the work of reformation—seemingly ignorant of the spiritual indwelling as a vital force, a regenerating power—he can only exhort the clergy to “*keep up the form and face of religion.*” The good bishop, confiding in the externals of religion more than in its spiritual force, had mistaken the true agencies of salvation. Nor was he aware that God had already commenced a genuine revival of religion in the land. Eleven years before his Spirit had moved upon the heart of Mr. Wesley and his associates, kindling there the true revival flame. It had not attracted the attention of the world; it placed little stress upon the “form and

face of religion," but it burned deep into the hearts of the simple, Christ-loving disciples. The movement of Bishop Butler produced scarcely a ripple upon the surface. But who shall set bounds to that other revival inspired by the Holy Ghost? More than a century has rolled away, and yet the mighty tide is rolling onward, swelling upward, and bearing upon its bosom myriads of redeemed, blood-washed souls up to the throne of God.

So often God commences a work when and where we least expect. Thus the return of the ark was as unexpected as it was joyful to Israel. I imagine that I see these men of Bethshemesh, scattered over the fields adjacent to the city gathering their harvest. How their hearts go out after the ark of God, now in an enemy's land! What sacred memories of the precious seasons of joy and gladness when God was in the midst of his people! But now in what strange contrast are the desolations of Zion! Sorrow swells the heart; the tear gushes from the eye. Just then an object is dimly seen in the distance, at once awakening curiosity to ascertain what it may be. The tear is brushed from the eye. Deepening interest intensifies the gaze. It comes nearer. "Look! look! the ark!" a hundred voices exclaim. Others catch the sound, repeat the exclamation; and thus the glad news is heralded forth throughout all the land. So, also, the visitings of God in Zion, longed for, prayed for by faithful hearts, still break upon the Church unexpectedly—coming "without observation."

What an inauspicious morning for Christianity,

to all human appearance, was that of Pentecost! Christ had been crucified; he had disappeared from the scene. His disciples were timid and fearful, without plan or purpose. They are without courage or power to act. Fifty days have passed. No word has been uttered; no sign of unwonted power has been given. The enemies of Christ now deem their triumph complete. The very name of the wonderful crucified man is fast fading from the memory of the fickle multitude. The timid disciples are only an occasion for jest and ridicule. Just then a strange sound of a mighty rushing wind is heard. What mean these circling eddies gathering around the disciples? What mean these cloven tongues of fire that tip their brows? What mean these wondrous utterances that proclaim in so many tongues the wondrous mystery of the resurrection? What means this swaying of the mighty multitude? Why, God is there. These timid men are timid no longer. A new inspiration has taken possession of their hearts. They are "endued with power." They stand forth in the very courts of the Temple; they utter there testimony in the very presence of the murderers of Christ. No fear can trammel them now. The awed multitude feel and acknowledge the new element of power.

Thus, too, in genuine revivals of religion, men—even the wicked—are compelled to recognize the presence and power of God. Mark the great revival that swept over our country just before the breaking out of the desolating civil war which deluged the land in blood. It was an obvious baptism of the Churches, infusing into them a purer and mightier

spiritual power preparatory to that event. How distinctly marked was it, as of God! Like the descending dew, reviving influences came down over all the land. They came mysteriously, unexpectedly, without perceived cause or author. Hearts every-where were touched, affected, subdued. The Divine presence was felt—scarcely less so than on the day of Pentecost.

This spiritual presence sometimes pervades an entire community. It goes into prayerless homes, visits hard and unbelieving hearts. And thus sinners that could be reached in no other way are brought to Christ. Many years ago a revival was in progress in a little inland town. It took hold upon the entire community. Business was in a great measure suspended. The dram-shops were forsaken, and the whole village, saint and sinner, night after night and day after day, seemed to be congregated in the Methodist church. Some seven miles distant from the village, up among the mountains, lived a poor intemperate man. He earned a scanty livelihood by burning charcoal and peddling it in the village. He had never been in a Protestant church. He had never read a chapter in the Bible. At this time he had not been in the village for some weeks. A mysterious influence seemed to come upon him. He could not throw it off. Sleep departed from him. He could neither work, nor eat, nor rest. Drawn by its cords, he came down to the village. But all along the way he was exclaiming to himself, "What for?" He visited his accustomed haunts, but a voice seemed to say to him, "Not here," and he turned

away. The bell rung, and the tide of people commenced flowing along to the church. He knew nothing of the revival, and not even what a revival was; but now the mysterious power seemed to move him forward with the throng. He entered the church, heard the Word, became convinced of sin and of his need of a Savior. At the altar he found peace, and, though long years has continued to magnify the grace of God, which flows out—a spiritual power—far beyond all human instrumentalities, awakening the heart to the consciousness of things Divine.

I know not how it may have been with others, but I have often felt, when first entering the room where a genuine revival was in progress, that the very atmosphere was impregnated with a Divine presence. Such are the occasions that lead us with holy awe and adoring wonder to say,

“Lo! God is here! Let us adore,  
And own how dreadful is this place;  
Let all within us feel his power,  
And silent bow before his face.”

And it is the same recognition of the Divine presence in the midst of the Church that enables the saint of God to exclaim,

“Present we know thou art;  
But O, thyself reveal!  
Now, Lord, let every bounding heart  
The mighty comfort feel.”

Such are the seasons of transcendent spiritual manifestation in the Church of the living God. They come bearing the signet of their Divine origin.



They come swaying their mighty power over the hearts of men, and giving to the Church unwonted light, and life, and power.

III. But again, though God is the author of such glorious manifestations, yet he employs *angelic and human agencies in bringing them about.*

God has sometimes thrust out men, giving to them a peculiar mission as revivalists in the Church. They speak to the souls of men; they arouse Christians from their sluggishness; they fire the Church with unwonted zeal. Communities are moved; sinners are awakened; men are saved. I might point to Benjamin Abbott, Jesse Lee, and a host of others thus called and gifted in the olden time. And it seems to me that such a mission we may now claim for James Caughey, William Taylor, Mrs. Palmer, and others, whose souls are divinely inspired and empowered.

But every-where God uses instrumentalities. The human instrumentalities that always precede and accompany revivals of religion may not be very obvious to men, nor very prominent in the movement. But it is an agency known and approved by God, small in its beginning, but large in its results. It is the little spring hidden in the remote forest, or in the deep gorge at the base of the distant mountain, a gurgling stream at first, but swelling into a majestic river, bearing on its bosom the opulence of the country to enrich the commerce of the world. So of these hidden springs of revival—insignificant in the eyes of men—they bear onward the destinies of the world and swell the revenues of heaven.

During the first year of my ministry I visited the town of Barkhamsted, in the State of Connecticut. I was there told that many years before a long season of spiritual dearth had been experienced in the town. The social meetings had literally died out, and very few attended the sacramental occasions. Vital piety seemed almost extinct. The pastor deplored the condition of the Church, but seemed utterly powerless to stay the downward tendency of things. One Sabbath morning he preached with unusual unction and power. A new inspiration moved his heart and nerved his mind. At the close of the sermon he exclaimed, "Brethren, I have had unusual feelings to-day, and I should not wonder if God was about to revive his work in this town." And God did revive his work. Both minister and Church received the holy baptism, and more than two hundred souls were converted to God. Now mark the sequel. It was soon found out that three or four precious souls, mourning over the desolations of Zion, had banded themselves together to spend one hour each day in earnest, agonizing prayer for a revival of God's work. Their names are unknown. The earth has made no record of their faith and prayer, but there is a blessed record above. In the great day of eternity the Judge will know whose brow to stud with the crown that shall sparkle in the sunlight of heaven. The feeblest saint, thank God! has power that may prevail with the Most High.

It is narrated of a poor blacksmith, a pious member of the Presbyterian Church in the western part

of the State of New York, that he became powerfully exercised about the condition of the Church. So fearful had been the declension of religion that even the sacrament had been given up, and no one even thought of a prayer meeting. The pastor had fallen into the same deep spiritual decline. What could the poor blacksmith do? He did not fret at the Church and complain of the minister. But his heart was deeply wounded; his distress of mind was well-nigh insupportable. He made his closet his hiding-place and God his refuge. His mind was so distressed that his appetite failed, sleep departed, and his strength was wasting away. One Friday afternoon he shut up his shop and betook himself to prayer. There, while pouring out his heart in agony of soul, God sent to witness that his prayer was accepted. He had no misgivings, no doubts. The indubitable seal had been set upon his heart. When God's Spirit speaks to the believing heart there is no longer any questioning or doubt, even though the thing seems to be hedged about with impossibilities. He went to his minister; told him that a revival was about to take place; asked that a prayer meeting should be announced on the coming Sabbath. The minister was incredulous. He interposed various objections. But the poor blacksmith overcame them all. The meeting was appointed. To the surprise of the minister and every body else, the house was crowded. The Spirit of God came down upon the assembly. Tears flowed; sobs were heard; confessions were made. The fire began to burn. A revival ensued which spread all through the town, and

extended through all the region round about. Hundreds were converted. What a triumph of faith was that on the part of the poor blacksmith! The crown upon his brow shall be studded with a brighter glory in the kingdom of our God than that worn by many a pulpit orator who has entranced thousands with his eloquence. What encouragement to every Christian, no matter how lowly in position or limited in gifts, to pray, to act, and to believe!

Thus we see God uses means. The Holy Spirit is, indeed, a universal presence. So is electricity. Yet it is unfelt. It is not manifest. But bring the surcharged cloud into contact with a suitable conductor, and then the vivid flash of sheeted fire and the deep roar of heaven's artillery will symbolize the omnipotence of the Divine presence. The wondering disciple inquired of the Savior, "How is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" He knew that God was present—everywhere present—but the mysterious manifestation, such as the world could not comprehend, perplexed and puzzled him. But on the day of Pentecost, when the holy fire not only tipped his brow and touched his tongue, *but filled his heart*, the mystery was solved. That same revelation may come to our hearts, if we only have faith to believe in God. Faith is the conductor that reaches up to the clouds, surcharged with Divine mercy. Along its wires there comes, streaming down into the believing heart, wave after wave of the Divine manifestation, filling the soul with unspeakable joy. Along its wires there comes, streaming down into the believing Church, flood after flood of revival

power, quickening all its energies, causing it to glow with the Divine presence, and making it victorious in pushing forward the conquests of Christ over the souls of men.

IV Another characteristic of revivals is that they produce sudden transformations of character.

I am aware that men, in judging upon the subject, are prone to undervalue sudden conversions. They seem to imagine that if the work is done suddenly, it will not be well done, nor permanent. They would have men educated into religion ; grow up into it. They would demand a long time ; would abjure excitement ; would do up the work in precise forms, very genteelly, very respectably. Instead of direct, sudden, powerful conversion from sin to God, they would train men into the observance of the forms of religion. But how often does God cut the work short ! Indeed, if we look at the revivals, or at the individual conversions recorded in the Bible, we shall find that almost always they were sudden as well as powerful.

Take the first great revival, that which occurred on the day of Pentecost. Over three thousand were converted in one day. Who were they ? "Strangers," who had come up from almost all lands to Jerusalem. They knew little about Christ or his doctrine up to the very hour when the apostles spoke. Some of them probably had never heard even the name of Christ before. But moved by the Spirit of God, they came rushing together ; listened ; were convinced ; cried out in their agony ; were led to Christ ; and that very day three thousand of them found peace. There was some confusion and some noise on that

occasion, most probably—some things that would have been offensive to the fastidious tastes of cold, lifeless formalists. But the fruit was good. The Lord “saved” them ; their hearts were filled with “gladness ;” they went forth “praising God”—just as young converts do in the present day. And lest any one should doubt whether this multitude, so suddenly converted, did not soon fall away, it is distinctly recorded that “they continued steadfastly in the apostle’s doctrine and fellowship.” This seems to cover the whole ground, and to settle the whole question. For, was not this first great revival of religion, under the Gospel dispensation, designed to be the type of all true revivals that should come after in the Church ? Was it not the true unvailing of that spiritual power which the Gospel has brought to men, and which God designed should be ever present in his Church, and through her should be manifested to the world ? May the Church never fail of this indwelling power ! And may its light gleam out often, with sudden and glorious brightness as on the day of Pentecost, bringing into her fold “daily such as shall be saved !”

See, again, how the Gospel was first introduced among the Gentiles. It was the very first Gospel sermon that Cornelius had ever heard ; but “while Peter yet spake,” he believed, and he and his household were so baptized with the Holy Ghost that even Jewish exclusiveness could not deny to them the Christian rite of baptism.

But look at some of the earlier individual conversions, and see what the lesson is which they teach us upon this point. Consider the case of Saul, the

persecutor. Full of wrath, blaspheming the name of Jesus, his hands stained with the blood of martyrs, he goes forth on his mission of death to Damascus. Behold, the Lord meets him! He is stricken down in the way, and in three days, not only soundly converted, but called and commissioned to be an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. Rather a sudden transformation this, and quite damaging to the slow-conversion theory!

The Ethiopian eunuch had just come from a distant country. He knew nothing about Christ; nothing about the descent of the Holy Ghost. Through the mysterious types of the Old Testament he had been trying to spell out the way of salvation. Philip joins him as he travels along the highway; discourses to him of Christ. Light breaks in upon the darkened mind, and he is baptized into Christ upon the spot. Nor is this all. Philip is caught suddenly away. The eunuch, without being trained or instructed further, possessing simply the knowledge of Christ and the love of God in his soul, is sent back to preach the Gospel in the dark regions from whence he came.

This was precisely what our fathers did in the early day of Methodism. They went forth, throughout the length and breadth of the land, preaching the Gospel every-where. Their ministry was in demonstration of the Spirit. Signs and wonders followed. Revivals of wonderful power were kindled along their path. Multitudes heard the Word and received it with joy. But these men of God tarried not. Leaving the young converts to carry forward the work

they had commenced, they pushed forward into the regions beyond ; and thus the work grew, and spread, and multiplied every-where. Who would not rejoice to see the return of the day of the Church's wondrous power—so like primitive Christianity—so like the apostle's day ?

“God's Spirit then would speak  
Through lips of humble clay,  
And hearts of adamant would break,  
And rebels would obey.”

There might be noise and confusion, offensive to irreligion ; there might be some extravagancies exceptionable in the eye of the cold, calculating formalist, but there would be life and power ; and sinners would be renewed and clothed in their right minds. They would be reformed in their habits, as well as changed in their feelings ; their sins would be washed away ; they would be endued with spiritual power, and become, in turn, co-workers with God. Such a consummation would make the Church all-glorious, as she would become all-victorious !

But not only in the apostolic times, but in all great revivals, *sinners are suddenly transformed*. The drunkard is taken up from the gutter, his filth is cleansed away, and he becomes a new man in Christ Jesus ; the profane swearer forgets his oaths and blasphemy ; the profligate seeker of pleasure is changed in all his tastes, habits, and pursuits ; the infidel lets go his infidelity, and takes hold upon Christ. I once knew a man who had been long striving to confirm himself in infidelity. He was shrewd in argument, cutting in his satire, bold and often fearful in his



denunciation. He seemed to be wholly abandoned of God, and given up to unbelief. No one wished to come into contact with him. The most weighty and convincing evidences of Christianity were met with a sneer and a scoff. Twenty years of blasphemy and unbelief seemed to have left the fearful inscription of a lost soul upon his very countenance. A revival took place. It was mighty, deep, all-pervading, taking hold upon the entire community. The infidel and scoffer came, perhaps, out of idle if not wicked curiosity to the place of meeting. The malicious scoff curled his lip and sat upon his brow. But one night God's Spirit took hold upon him. His infidelity was shaken out of him as in a moment. Trembling, he approached the altar. Groans, and tears, and strugglings of soul seemed almost to rend his body, and threatened to tear away his life for days. His conversion was as sudden and as powerful as was his awakening. Blessed with salvation—full, clear, glorious—he shouted aloud the praises of God! It was a wonderful transformation. But a dozen years after, God set his seal upon it in a triumphant and glorious death. Brethren, let us not be afraid of sudden conversions. God spoke creation into being in a moment. He can speak life into the soul of the repenting sinner quick as the lightning descends from the cloud; and when God does the work, though in the twinkling of an eye, we need not fear.

So also, in these revivals, there are wonderful transformations in Christian character. The transformation of the apostles on the day of Pentecost

was wonderful—complete! their timidity is all gone, and they are now armed with a courage and a power which surpasses that of earth. It is divine. There is nothing like the baptismal power and the work of a revival to strengthen and establish Christians. Indeed, very few become thoroughly established in religion, so as to comprehend fully its life and its work, till they have passed through at least one revival season, and been imbued with its spirit and identified with its work.

V Such a revival as we have described *is eminently desirable*.

May we not say that there are those who desire it? Are there not children of God whose burdened hearts cry out with longing desire, "O, Lord, revive thy work?" Many a minister of Jesus Christ, mourning over the desolations of Zion, and sorrowing over the unfruitfulness of the Word, is day and night praying for the coming of the time in which God shall favor his people. Many a godly parent, with children unconverted, growing up wayward, sinful, and in the road to hell, feels that almost his last hope for their arrest and salvation depends upon the speedy revival of God's work. There are sinners, too, who are looking forward to such a revival with hope and strong desire. They have passed through other revivals, they hardly know how, unconverted. All the ordinary means of grace have spent their force upon them without effect. They do not want to go down to perdition. The vague expectation of being somehow saved has been an ideal fancy with them all their days. But of late the prospect has

grown dim, the hope has been growing weaker. Now they have come to feel that some powerful revival-shock is the only thing that can rouse their soul from the lethargy that, like a leaden weight, is settling down upon them. O, how they long for the coming of such a revival! It is the only thing which seems to stand between them and perdition. My brethren, could you enter into the thoughts and feelings of this class of men, could you realize the deep anguish of spirit under which they sometimes writhes almost in an agony of despair, your own hearts would be touched, and you yourselves would be stirred up to pray for a revival of God's work.

It is desirable for the sake of individuals. There are many young whose characters are just forming. Those characters will become fixed by and by. How important that the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ should enter in among those influences by which their characters are formed! There are others, unconverted men and women, who have advanced far in life. They are respectful toward religion, but have drifted on and on in life till their locks are already gray, and their steps are halting to the tomb. Ten, twenty, and even forty years ago there was more ground to hope for their salvation than there is now. O, how many there are who are thus drifting farther and still farther away from God, and heaven, and hope! Faintly even now the Gospel call falls upon their ear. Soon its sound will fade away and be gone forever. What shall arrest them but the power of God? What but that mighty shaking of dry bones that takes place when the

Spirit of God moves upon the face of the dry and bleaching plain? Come, O thou breath of God, and breathe upon these slain; open these graves of the dead; sweep over this open valley, so full of dry bones and so very dry! Prophecy with revival power, and these dry bones shall live.

Such a revival is desirable to quicken the Church and to preserve individual Christians from spiritual decline. It will revive their flagging zeal, inspire them with a mightier faith, lead to a new and holier dedication to God, and lift them up to a more elevated and glorious plane of Christian experience. It may shock the proprieties of dead formalism; but it will be a life-giving power in the Church of God. A revival is a vitalizing *in* the Church. And I doubt whether there is any thing else that will perpetuate *vital* Christianity in a Church, any thing that will make a Church an active, vital, aggressive force for the effecting of the salvation of men.

Such a revival is also desirable in view of the great enterprises of Christianity. The missionary work demands something more than money, than men, than sacrifices. It needs the all-pervading inspiration of the Holy Ghost, that the heathen may know that it is not a lifeless form, an empty letter, which we send unto them; but that it is the embodiment of a new and grander life—the life of God in the souls of men. The manifestation will do what no reasoning nor logic could effect—it will enter the heart. Those human sympathies, so long buried beneath the rubbish of heathenism and almost smothered, shall be stirred and quickened as the new

life enters into the soul. Broad as is human woe, deep as is human sympathy, so broad and so deep is this penetrating, vitalizing power of the grace of God in the soul. It may spread all around the globe, leaving no heart on all the broad earth untouched or unsaved.

Home evangelization demands just such a revival. There is a deep, heart-felt anxiety in the hearts of many Christian men in regard to the demoralization of the masses, especially in our great cities. Vice is increasing; the workers of iniquity are becoming bold; wickedness is flaunting itself in the face of open day. The victims of the loathsome dens of pollution are multiplying every hour. Unnumbered victims, not a few of them swept onward from homes of piety and love, are going down daily, hourly into hell. How shall this alarming evil be checked? Your elegant churches, and the beautiful sermons delivered in them, are utterly powerless in the battle against these lower forms of evil. Reason and argument are of little avail. You must reach the heart; you must arouse the blinded, bewildered conscience. Only let the Spirit of God move upon these masses of ignorance, pollution, and death; only let the old Methodist fire be kindled in their midst, and their hearts will be stirred. Multitudes will be saved, being pulled, as it were, "out of the fire."

And now, beloved friends, have we not said enough to show you how indispensable revivals of religion are to the stability and growth of the Church? how indispensable they are as an aggressive force against the powers of darkness, and an agency

in saving the souls of men? When did the Church ever need such a revival more than now, so surrounded and beset, and yet pressed with such momentous responsibilities? Let us go before God on bended knee and cry out with streaming eyes and yearning hearts, "O Lord, revive thy work!" Let us agonize there till upon *us* and upon *the whole Church* the old fire of the Holy Ghost comes down as in the days of old. Then shall the Church rise in her might and power; to the wicked she shall be "terrible as an army with banners," and "the righteousness thereof shall go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth." Amen!

## XV.

THE EARTH TO BE FILLED WITH THE  
GLORY OF GOD.

*"But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord."* Num. xiv, 21; Matt. xiii, 33.

RARELY has there been a period in the history of our race so dark and hopeless as that when the scene in our text opens. The knowledge of the true God was confined to a single nation—ignorant and unstable in their character—wandering and suffering in the wilderness. And even they, at this very moment, were in a state of rebellion against God. Above their guilty heads the unsheathed sword was already gleaming for their destruction. To all human appearance it would really have seemed as if the knowledge of God, the light of salvation, and the hope of the world, were about to be blotted out forever. Just at this critical moment, when the seals of the pestilence were about to be unloosed, prayer, that mighty lever, which, resting upon the fulcrum of the atonement and swayed by the power of faith, is able to move not only the earth, but heaven itself—prayer avails with the Most High. Moved by the intercessions of Moses, God not only pardons the grievous offenses of his people, but he is pleased to pledge his own self-existence and eternity for the ultimate revelation of his glory in all the earth.

We propose to consider, first, *the import of this promise*; secondly, *the certainty of its realization*.

Some have supposed, from the peculiar phraseology of the verse following, that the earth was to be filled with the glory of the Lord as a consequence of the condign punishment that should fall upon the rebels in the camp of Israel. Because, when the nations heard of this they would honor and fear the Almighty. Others understand that God would get to himself this great glory in the earth by means of the miraculous and illustrious manner in which he would conduct his people through the midst of their enemies, and bring them safely into the promised land. But we find a key to the clear and satisfactory interpretation of the passage in the simple fact that it is God's response to the apprehension expressed by Moses that the Divine name would be dishonored among the surrounding nations. He takes from Moses the ground of apprehension. He will not suffer his honor to be tarnished. His glory shall shine resplendent, not only among these nations, but it shall fill the whole earth.

I. First, then, we notice the import of the promise.

In his intercession, Moses not only manifested an intense agony of soul for the salvation of the people, but also a deep concern for the honor of God among the surrounding and idolatrous nations. And among the arguments with which he filled his mouth was the Divine honor. He called to mind that it had been reported among the inhabitants of all these lands how God had delivered his people from the hand of the oppressor; how he was among them,



seen face to face, his cloud standing over them and going before them by night and by day. Then would not the heathen say, if the people were destroyed, that it was because God was not able to fulfill his promises? Such was the plea of Moses. "I have heard thee," said the Lord, "and have pardoned the iniquity of my people according to thy word." And not only will I spare them, but I will also vindicate my honor. Not only shall Egypt and the nations of Idumea and Canaan behold with wonder and astonishment the mighty deliverances of Jacob wrought by the hand of the Almighty; not only shall all these lands be compelled to reverence my great and terrible name, "but as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord."

The word "glory" signifies brightness or splendor. "The glory of the Lord" is an expression drawn from the light streaming forth from the Shekinah, which marked the dwelling-place of Jehovah. It denotes the light in which the special personal presence of God has ever been enshrined; in which, indeed, it appears to dwell in the heaven of heavens, dazzling with its brightness the vision of angel and seraphim. Moses said, "Show me thy glory"—that is, let the full manifestation of thy presence break upon my vision; but God said unto him, "I will make all my goodness pass before thee," and proclaim my gracious name in thine ear; but the full manifestation of my glory thou canst not bear, for "there shall no man see my face and live." In its figurative sense, glory has come to mean the manifestation of excellence or honor. As applied to God,

it signifies that manifestation of his perfections and of his dominion by which he makes himself known upon the earth. We may be said to behold the glory of the Lord when we come to the knowledge of his being and character—especially the revelation of his divine power and his saving grace. It implies such a revelation of himself to his intelligent creatures that they will love, honor, and obey him.

Numberless are the modes of the manifestation of the Divine glory. God is seen in the works of creation. "The heavens," says the Psalmist, "declare the glory of God." The visible heavens with their broad expanse, their countless worlds of light, reveal to us the majesty and glory of God. They proclaim not only his being, but his power, wisdom, and benevolence—thus manifesting to the eye of intelligence the perfections of the Godhead. God is also revealed in history. Some may fail to recognize him there ; and to such "all history is but the ceaseless ebb and flow of accidents—a chaos of intermingling and conflicting occurrences without harmony or design." Yet, whether seen or not, God is in history—in *all* history. No one can survey its lengthened stream without recognizing the hand that has cast up its banks, scooped out its channel, and given impulse to the mighty current. Said our Savior to Martha, as he was about to display his omnipotence by summoning her brother from the tomb—"Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldest see the glory of the Lord?" There is also a spiritual as well as a material and providential manifestation of God. The Psalmist refers to this when he yearns

for the Divine presence in the sanctuary as the soul-satisfying revelation of the Divine glory—"To see thy power and thy *glory*, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary."

But in all the manifestation of God's glory to a fallen world what feature is so striking, or in what form does it shine forth with such transcendent luster as in the grand scheme of redemption by Jesus Christ? "And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." No sooner had man fallen than the scheme of mercy began to be unfolded. It was revealed in the gracious promise of a seed that should bruise the serpent's head. It was revealed in the types of the earlier dispensation. A manifest glory overshadowed the ark and filled the tabernacle. But the glory of the Lord, as it is revealed to us, consists not in the pillar nor the cloud, for the types and shadows of the law have passed away. The Temple and the mercy-seat are no more. But a spiritual temple, of which this was the shadow, now invites our approach. The ancient priesthood, having accomplished its mission, has become extinct; "but Christ abideth a priest forever." The daily sacrifices in the Temple have ceased, and into its holiest sanctuary the high priest no longer enters to make atonement for the sins of the people. But Christ Jesus—Immanuel, "God with us"—"hath appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself," and having "entered once into the holy place, has obtained eternal redemption for us." *This* was the true sacrifice—the divine reality, of which *they*

were the types and shadows. They were the dim adumbrations of the Divine glory. But when "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us," then did we "behold his glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." This is he who is declared to be "the *brightness* of his Father's glory and the express image of his person." How, then, is the revelation of the Divine glory made to us—how to the world but by the proclamation of God revealed in Christ? in his incarnation, in his redemption? The proclamation of this mysteriously-glorious event, coming as it does in all the plenitude of Gospel grace, offering pardon to the offender and life to him that was dead in trespasses and sins, is the sublime manifestation of the Divine glory in which all other manifestations center, and to which all others are tributary. "In the face of Jesus Christ"—in his humiliation and death, in his resurrection and atonement, in the spiritual manifestations of his presence and power—the glory of God is revealed with a brightness and splendor surpassing all the other manifestations of God.

"Here the whole Deity is known;  
Nor dares a creature guess  
Which of the glories brightest shone,  
The justice or the grace."

With this glory *all the earth* is to be filled. Not *these lands* only, as some would say, but *πάσαν τήν γῆν*—*all the earth*. Nothing but this broad, comprehensive signification would constitute our text a full response to the fear expressed by Moses. Nothing short of this would have expressed the full scope of

the ultimate purpose of Jehovah. To the view of Moses it is quite possible that this promise expressed but little more than the discomfiture of the enemies of God and the safe establishment of Israel in the promised land. But, thanks be to God, the promise was pregnant with results reaching far beyond and comprehending all the earth.

Before now we have stood upon a beautiful landscape which seemed to be bounded by a distant forest. But as we approached the line of that forest, through the trees we caught glimpses of parts of the landscape that had been cut off from our view. As in the line of our advance we came up and passed by what seemed to be the termination of our landscape, lo! a new scene rises to our view; the landscape not only extends beyond, but rises into higher grandeur and blossoms in lovelier beauty. Just so with the word of prophecy and of promise. He who received the revelation may see only the first and prominent object in the foreground. To him this seems to exhaust the Divine revelation. Such is human short-sightedness. Beyond the one object, definite and apparent to his eye, it contains more glorious events in the background; it comprehends higher wonders and grander events, in the unfolding scheme of Divine mercy—events not as distinctly visible to the beholder, but as distinctly engraved upon the picture to be unrolled and made to flame forth with the clear seal and impress of Divinity in the long ages of the future. So in this prophetic promise. Moses, perhaps, beheld in it only the vindication of the Divine character among the

nations of Egypt, Idumea, and Canaan. Not so in the Divine mind. There it comprehends a wider range—it stretches onward through the ages.

“All the earth shall be *filled*.” Not only shall it have knowledge of, but it shall be *filled with* this glory. Being filled implies not merely universal présence, but supremacy, triumph, undisputed sway. This prophetic promise, then, shall be fulfilled in its higher and complete sense only when the benign influences of the Gospel shall be extended in triumph and power to the ends of the earth, and all recognize one God and Father and one Lord Jesus Christ. Then shall the full measure of blessing to our race, ratified and sealed in this promise, be realized. All the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord. Then shall

“One song employ all nations, and all cry,  
Worthy the Lamb, for he was slain for us !  
The dwellers in the vales and on the rocks  
Shout to each other ; and the mountain-tops  
From distant nations catch the flying joy,  
Till, nation after nation taught the strain,  
Earth rolls the rapturous hosanna round.”

II. We pass, secondly, to notice the certainty of the realization of this promise.

We come to the consideration of this profound and momentous question with more intense interest, because so much effort has been put forth within the few past years to create a doubt, even in the Church, of the ultimate redemption of the world. We are even told that, in spite of all our toils and sacrifices, all our prayers and faith, in spite of all

Heaven is doing for our humanity by the wide and powerful diffusion of the Holy Spirit, and through the multiplied agencies of salvation, and in spite of the modern missionary movement, kindling and illuminating the whole Church to a degree unparalleled since the day of Pentecost itself—in spite of all these the world is growing worse and worse. Others tell us that not only are the universal diffusion and prevalence of Christianity impossible in fact, but that the Bible has never warranted the expectation of such results. It behooves the Christian, then, to look around him and to inquire, “Wherefore do we labor and pray? By whom have we been sent forth upon this warfare? at whose cost, and for what result?”

The Divine testimony with regard to the spread and triumph of the Gospel in all the earth is clear and explicit. Let us take the “Thus saith the Lord” upon this subject; let us make our appeal to the law and to the testimony, and in the strength of their decisions rest our cause and build our hope.

In song did the monarch minstrel celebrate the coming triumphs of the Messiah. “His name shall endure forever; his name shall be continued as long as the sun, and men shall be blessed in him; all nations shall call him blessed.” Psalm lxxii, 17 “He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him, and his enemies shall lick the dust. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him, all nations shall serve him.” Verses 8, 9, 11. “All the ends of the world shall

remember and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee." Psalm xxii, 27. "Thy way shall be known upon earth; thy saving health among all nations; then shall the earth yield her increase, and God, even our God, shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him." Psalm lxvii, 2, 6, 7. Thus is fulfilled the pledge of the Father—"Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." Psalm ii, 8. And thus, also, the Son of God "sees of the travail of his soul and is satisfied."

If we turn to the prophets, not one of them but seems to have bright and glorious visions of the universal triumph of the Redeemer's kingdom. "And it shall come to pass in the last days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. He shall judge among the nations; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." Isaiah ii, 2-4. "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." Isaiah xi, 6-9. "It shall come that I will gather all nations and tongues, and they shall come and see



my glory." Isaiah lxvi, 18. "All flesh shall come to worship before me, saith the Lord." Verse 23. To say that these predictions have already been fulfilled would be to divest them of all proper tone and signification.

But again, to what can we refer the following glorious predictions but to the spread and universal triumph of the religion of Christ? "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, thy God reigneth! thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing; for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion. The Lord hath

made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God." Isaiah lvii, 7-10. "The earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." Hab. ii, 14. "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; . . . behold thy king cometh unto thee. He shall speak peace to the

heathen; and his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth." Zech. ix, 9, 10. "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth; in that day there shall be one Lord, and his name one," xiv, 9. And in this day of universal Gospel triumph, there shall be inscribed even "upon the bells of the horses, Holiness unto the Lord." Verse 20. The prophetic vision of the kingdom of Christ is a "stone cut out of the mountain without hands," which "became a great mountain

and filled the whole earth." Dan. ii, 35. Or, again, our Savior likens it "unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till the whole was leavened." If these things do not teach that the kingdom of Christ in the natural progress of its growth shall fill the whole earth, and that all nations shall be leavened with the leaven of righteousness, we are utterly at a loss to conceive what intelligible meaning can be attached to them.

Says the prophet Daniel, "I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that"—mark the extent of that kingdom—"that all people, nations, and languages should serve him," vii, 13, 14. "And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him." Verse 27. "For, from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering, saith the Lord of hosts." Mal. i, 11. Our Savior himself declares to the disciples, that "this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations." Matt. xxiv, 15. "Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name

among all nations." Luke xxiv, 46, 47. The Revelator "saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." Rev. xiv, 6. And this Gospel must continue to be preached till the measure of prophecy is full, and "the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever."

"O long-expected day, begin,  
Dawn on these realms of woe and sin."

Having thus seen that the Bible distinctly asserts the spread of the Gospel into all the earth and its universal triumph, we are naturally led to inquire whether there is any thing in the Gospel itself—its nature and provisions—indicative of this destiny? And here we find two elements—universal adaptation and an inexhaustible power of assimilation; the one an element of *fitness*, the other of *power*.

The Gospel possesses universal applicability, and hence there is nothing, in the nature of things, to prevent its universal spread and triumph. To take different ground from this would be to pour contempt upon the Almighty; it would be to question the wisdom of his plan or the benevolence of his character. But look at Christianity. Every essential element of it—whether it be doctrine, or agency, or even external rite—every essential element of it is stamped with universality and perpetuity. Does universal wickedness prevail? Behold, a universal atonement has been made. Are mortals defiled and impure?

Behold, the blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin. Is the valley of dry bones of vast extent, and is it very dry? It needs only that the breath of the Lord sweep over it, and the bleaching mass is clothed with a new and glorious life. Does the Christian need an impulse to work for God and for men? Behold, the love of Christ constraineth him.

There is nothing more wonderful in Christianity—we will not except even the mysteries of redemption—nothing more wonderful than its universal adaptation. It is a characteristic that pertains to no other religion on the earth. It at once stamps the religion of Christ with the broad seal of divinity. All the wisdom of the nation is found inadequate to devise even a single law that shall, for any considerable time, be adapted to the exigencies of a single state. But, thanks be to God, here is a system, relating not only to the physical and social, but to the moral and immortal nature; entering into and comprehending every interest of life and every function of our being; and yet it is adapted to man alike in all ages and all nations; adapted to man also in all the varying phases of his character and condition in all parts of the globe. In fact, there is nothing local in its character, nothing national, nothing temporary even. It may enchain with admiration and overwhelm with wonder the loftiest intellect ever enthroned in our humanity; but, at the same time, a child may comprehend the sublimity of its faith and feast upon the purity of its abiding hope. If it soars above the sublimest intellect, it also comes down to the simplest saint. “If there are depths in it,” said

Bishop Hall, "in which an elephant may swim, there are also streams across which a lamb may wade." Like the great deep, it has its oceans where leviathan may disport himself, but it has also its sheltered coves where the little limpet, safe sheltered and clinging to the rock, is washed and nurtured by its waves. It teaches the profoundest philosopher truths his philosophy could never know ; and to the galley-slave, toiling at the oar, it imparts a joy which a monarch's throne could not bestow. It supplies the *felt* want of the soul ; it refines and invigorates its powers ; and unites all who receive it into one great brotherhood of sympathy and love. Surely this wonderful adaptation—bearing as it does the broad seal of divinity, and proclaiming that with it "there is neither Jew nor Greek, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free ;" but that it is for all our race—surely this should confirm our confidence in the ultimate realization of the Divine promise that *all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord.*

*But there is also in the Gospel an assimilative and diffusive power which still further warrants us in the belief of its universal spread and triumph.* Describing this assimilative power, our Savior says, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." Matt. xiii, 33. In the leaven there is an assimilative power, which converts that which is brought into contact with itself into its own nature. Then it extends the assimilative process further and still further, till it has penetrated the whole mass. So it is with Christianity. Coming in

contact with the individual, it begins the great work of the moral transmutation of the soul. Silently and mysteriously it enters the human heart, gradually melts its hardness, lets in a ray of heavenly light, disarms its prejudice, subdues its rebellion, removes the evil bias of the will, purges away the deep corruption of the carnal mind, and turns the whole current of the moral nature heavenward. Thus does the unseen leaven of Gospel truth go down to the very depths of the human heart, and from the very center of man's moral nature work its way outward till the whole lump is leavened.

Through man individually, the Gospel goes out to man *collectively*. As the leaven diffuses itself from one atom to another, thus extending its assimilating power throughout the whole mass, so every individual is an atom in the great aggregate of humanity; and when his own heart has been assimilated with the leaven of the Cross, to him is imparted a power that may reach beyond. "Ye shall be endued," said our Lord, "with power from on high." Thus every Christian is endued with *power*—a power not merely social, intellectual, physical, or financial, but spiritual—mysterious in its energy, glorious in its results.

Not by one irresistible and universal display of his omnipotence did the Almighty choose to bring back our apostate and guilty race; but he embodies and sends forth such elements of moral and spiritual power as should enter the heart of individual man, and, having there subdued and destroyed sin, should radiate from him as a new center, thus going on from individual to individual to the conquest of the

whole race. Then when the mighty work is accomplished, the sublime spectacle of a rebel world redeemed, saved, sanctified, shall attest to an observant universe the wisdom, power, and benevolence of the triune God. In the Gospel there is a power and an efficiency to accomplish this very end. It pours a new current of potent influence into all the existing relationships of life, demonstrating it to be the wisdom of God and the power of God to the salvation of men.

Look at Christianity in its origin and early progress. How mean and obscure its origin! how feeble and utterly insignificant its early advocates! And yet, behold it gradually diffusing itself abroad; acquiring unwonted power over the minds of men; implanting deep in the heart the expansive principles of love and undying zeal for God; transforming the whole nature; going beyond the individual; penetrating with its subtile and mysterious power the very basis of the social system; giving a new direction and a new character to even imperial sway; till upon the brow of the mightiest monarch was placed the symbol of its divinity and the seal of its triumph. When we mark this career, so full of wondrous and glorious achievement, we feel that the language of the Savior was pregnant with deep and holy meaning when he compared the kingdom of heaven to leaven which should leaven the whole lump. We need not despair, then, of Christianity. The hidden 'heaven is at work. The process may be dark and mysterious, the progress imperceptible because of its slowness; but there is a resistless vitality in the

appointed agent. Its subtile influences are penetrating the mass into which it has been cast; atom after atom yields to its power, is assimilated to its likeness; and each, instead of exhausting, only adds to the resources of its power. Thus shall the Divine leaven continue to work till the whole world has become subject to its power and been assimilated to its likeness.

Wherever Christianity has gone it has not only remade man, but it has remade all the institutions of social and civil life. It also remakes both in the same way; not by mere mechanical arrangements, not by new external adjustments of the social organism, but by entering into and creating a new moral nature. The Gospel is the true reformer; it would purify the sources of moral influence, regulate the moral mechanism of social and conventional life, not by external reorganization, not, indeed, by any wholesale public measures, but by addressing itself to individual men, reforming and purifying individual hearts. It has been well said that "the cross stands alone in the world. It does not find friends, it makes them. If it wants an agency it has to create it. If the iron is to attract it must itself be magnetized." So when the Savior employs human instrumentality in drawing all men unto himself, he first magnetizes that agency at the cross. Only let the Church, the whole Church, be magnetized with the Divine energy of the Cross, and the most skeptical and unbelieving will no longer doubt that she possesses a power adequate to the world's redemption.

Again, we find not only warrant in the Bible for



the universal spread and triumph of the Gospel, and not only an adaptation in the Gospel to this end and a power adequate to its accomplishment, but there are evident providential indications of its near approach.

In whatever direction we turn we can not fail to read signs of the approaching triumph of the kingdom of Christ. Do I turn my eye to the dark and bleeding continent of Africa, so long despoiled of her sons and daughters? Who does not see the work of preparation, long since commenced, but still going forward? Along her coasts the beacon-lights of salvation have been erected. Christian nations are already encircling her wretched tribes with an invincible cordon of Christian power to protect from the man-hunter, the trafficker in flesh and blood without, and to shed the light of truth upon the darkness within. But the revelations of distant promise are just now being brought home to our very door. The new discoveries in regard to the condition and resources of interior Africa, its accessibility, the thronging millions of its inhabitants, their capabilities of civilization and Christian nurture, and the rich promise they afford as an almost boundless field for missionary labor, demonstrate that Africa is to be the theater of the next grand evolution in the mighty work of the world's redemption.

The vast empire of China, for ages girt around by an invincible wall of despotism and prejudice, has been made accessible to the missionary and the Bible. The booming cannon of war and blood, mingled, indeed, with other and even sadder sounds, that

only a few years ago resounded over the subjugated empires of Southern Asia, what were they but the death throes of heathenism? And as they die away, behold! there comes up in tones long, and deep, and loud, the imploring appeal for the Bible and the missionary. Even the old corrupt political power of Great Britain has discovered that the foundations of her empire in that vast region can never be securely laid without the extirpation of heathenism and the planting there of the Christian religion. Thus the policy England had not sufficient principle to adopt as a matter of duty, Providence has compelled her to adopt as matter of interest, thus making even the wrath of man subservient to the great ends of the kingdom of Christ. Japan will soon be not only accessible to the missionary, but will invite him to come. So, also, in Western Asia, where the Turkish empire has so long swayed its iron rule. Behold the rod of its power already broken, and the very seat of the false prophet decayed and rotten! The inveterate prejudice of Turk against Christian, the iron gate of Islamism, is melting away, and the Turkish empire to-day is almost inviting the Bible to supplant the Kōran.

But we must not fail to connect these grand events with the rise of the great missionary movement of the present age, and the increase of the resources and power of Christian nations. A little more than one hundred years ago the little band of Moravians at *Herrnhutt*—"the watch of the Lord"—in Germany, conceived the project of sending the Gospel to the heathen world. In 1732 behold the

little army—Christian David, Mathew Stach, and Christian Stach—landed upon the ice-bound coasts of Greenland! What though they are compelled to live upon shell-fish and sea-weed! what though they are buffeted and even stoned by the ignorant natives! They endure as seeing Him who is invisible. Amid that region of heathen darkness and death a fire shall yet be kindled whose light shall shine and whose heat shall warm till those hills and valleys shall become as the garden of the Lord. This forlorn hope was the rising star of the modern missionary enterprise. Then appeared the little speck in a distant and unpropitious part of the heavens, not even so big as a man's hand; but it has been rising higher, spreading wider, till the whole earth is overspread.

The movement has been slow. The Christian Church has been long in waking up to the Macedonian cry which comes up to her from almost every part of the globe. But, thanks be to God, conviction has at length penetrated to her very heart, and never before did the duty of evangelizing the whole earth take so deep a hold upon the followers of the Lamb as at the present day. No longer, thank God, does she need galvanizing upon the subject of Christian missions, for that cause is like a burning fire—inextinguishable and inexhaustible—flaming up in her very midst. And there shall it continue to burn, illuminating with its light and warming with its heat, till the frozen incrustations of selfishness are all dissolved, and she rises in the majesty and strength of her great Founder and goes forth to achieve the world's redemption.

When the pillar of fire moved before God's ancient people, the hosts of Israel marched onward. So now the Spirit of God is moving before the Christian Church, inviting her to march onward to the conversion of the world. The old barriers are being broken down, the old obstacles removed out of the way, and a highway for the Gospel is being opened up through all the dark places of the earth. And at the same time the power of aggressive action on the part of those to whom the dispensation of the Gospel is committed is immeasurably increased. What sublime discoveries in science! what striking improvements in the arts have become subservient to the cause of Christ! The activity and power of intellect, the accumulation of wealth, and the unprecedented spread of the commerce of Christian nations into every habitable part of the globe, and now the wonderful and wide-spread outpouring of the Holy Spirit, nerving the heart of the Church anew and awakening and converting untold myriads, are so many elements of power and of responsibility, all conducing to the same end. Christendom at this very moment, through ten thousand channels of power and influence, is acting upon and controlling the destiny of the entire globe. And the Church of Christ has only to prove herself equal to the emergency of the times, equal to the grandeur and glory of her mission, and Christianity will ere long be established in the ends of the earth.

Vast regions are yet to be subdued. The valley of dry bones is almost boundless in extent; the bones are without number, and very dry! But the

conquests of the Gospel in the ages that are past—its conquests over the minds, systems, and institutions of humanity—give assurance of still more brilliant achievements in the effulgent ages yet to come. Let me then learn to estimate the greatness and glory of this work—not by what has been done, or is now doing, but by the majestic revelations of the prophetic word. The work is just commenced ; the seed is just being sown ; the harvest shall ere long be gathered. The architect has just gathered together a few stones, and only the scaffolding as yet is reared ; but the grand temple shall by and by go up to its completion ; the top-stone shall be brought with shoutings of joy and of triumph ; and then the majestic building shall stand forth the wonder of all ages and of all intelligent creatures in the universe of God.

We, my brethren, may go down to the grave before the completion of this great work. But we shall witness the *work done, the triumph complete*. Bending over the battlements of heaven, we shall catch the mysterious, joyful sound, as it is wafted upward from our redeemed earth, and we shall bear it onward to the throne above us—our voices mingling with those of every creature in heaven and in earth—“ Alleluia, the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth ! ”

In conclusion, brethren, I will express only one or two thoughts without attempting their elaboration.

1. What encouragement does our subject afford us to pray for the vindication of the Divine honor and the revelation of the Divine glory in all the earth ! Moses prayed ; and from the dense darkness of the darkest period in the world's history there came forth

a star of light and of promise which has continued to wax in brightness and glory till it has become the blessed harbinger of the millennial triumph and reign upon our redeemed earth. *Prayer*—I had almost said—is more than missionaries, more than money! Nay, it is money, and missionaries, and *power* that shall be felt in the most distant part of the earth, and among the most degraded and abandoned of our race.

2. The assurance of success, of final triumph, should inspire us with boldness and confidence in this glorious warfare. The instinct of coming victory has inspired many a forlorn hope to achievements almost superhuman. The instinct of victory has, in fact, won the triumph on ten thousand battle-fields. Brethren, we have the pledge of sure, unfailing triumph. Not more certainly did the pillar of fire or of cloud move before God's ancient people than does his promise, his eternal pledge, with all the sanctions of his self-existence and of his almighty power, give assurance of ultimate triumph. Could this conviction be inwrought into the very *heart* of the Church, how would it quicken all her energies, multiply all her activities! and with what resistless power onward—right onward to the conquest of the world!

3. Our last remark is, that our labor and efforts should be proportioned to the greatness of the results we aim to accomplish. Measured by this standard, the scantiness of our offerings, the poverty of our sympathy, and the feebleness of our exertions seem but solemn mockery. May God breathe upon us,

and upon his whole Church, the full inspiration of that great missionary spirit which shall diffuse the Pentecostal fire, and zeal, and power through all her length and breadth, calling forth grander offerings, and invoking toils more heroic, and sacrifices more resplendent, for the redemption of the world!

## XVI.

### THE TEMPLE BUILT AND THE TEMPLE BLESSED.

A DEDICATION SERMON, PREACHED AT THE OPENING OF THE LECTURE  
AND SUNDAY SCHOOL ROOMS OF TRINITY METHODIST  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH, CIN., DEC. 18, 1859.

*"Who hath commanded you to build this house and to make up this wall?"* Ezra v, 3.

*"In all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee."* Exodus xx, 24.

I HAVE selected these two passages—the first as eminently suggestive of the obligation to erect temples for the living God, and the second as expressive of the great ends or purposes for which they should be erected. "The temple built and the temple blessed" will, then, constitute the general theme of our discussion this morning.

I. First, then, the temple built. Whence the authority—the obligation? "Who hath commanded you to build this house?"

1. It is proper that this question should be asked.

When the seventy years' bondage of the Jews was drawing to its close, there were found among them, even in their captivity, some whose "spirit



God had raised to go up to build the house of the Lord at Jerusalem." No sooner had they reached the Holy City, and provided comfortable homes for their families, than they commenced the rebuilding of the temple. The inhabitants of the land regarded the work with jealous eyes, and sought to defeat it by every possible means. At length they succeeded in obtaining a royal edict that the work should cease "till another commandment" should be issued by the imperial sovereign authorizing it to proceed. Having obtained this decree, their enemies hastened up to Jerusalem and compelled the Jews "to cease by force and power." For three years the work stood still. Then the people, without waiting for a new decree, but trusting in the living God, rose up and began again to build the temple, "and with them were the prophets of God helping them." As might have been expected, the opposition of their enemies was renewed. Tatnai, the governor of the Persian provinces this side of the Euphrates, was stirred up, and came to investigate the matter. And when he came "to the house of the great God" and saw it was builded with great stones, and timber was laid in the walls, and that the work was going fast on, and prospering in the hands of the people, he demanded of the elders, "Who hath commanded you to build this house and to make up this wall?" The answer was simple and sublime: "We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth." As if they had said, "We claim not that another commandment has been given, not that we are endowed with the authority of the Persian king, but we have the

authority of Him who is above all kings—‘the God of heaven and earth.’”

It is fitting that the question should be asked of you, my brethren, and, indeed, of all who are engaged in the work of building a temple for the worship of the living God. It is a question that will be asked. It will sometimes come from enemies, as it did to the Jews when rebuilding the temple; sometimes from friends and brethren, who, from kind and sympathizing motives, would know the grounds of action and the prospects of success. But whether this question comes from others, or whether it does not, every one engaged in building a house for God should ask it of himself, “Who hath commanded us to build this house; from whom have we derived authority; what are the motives by which we have been influenced, and what are the purposes we design to accomplish by this work?”

Coming up to-day to consecrate the portion of this new temple completed to the service of God, I trust you will not only ponder this question in your hearts, my brethren, but that you will also be able, with the same unhesitating confidence that was manifested by the builders of the second temple, to respond, “We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth”—we build at his command, on his authority, and for his glory.

2. But how may we ascertain the Divine will and become impressed with the reality of the Divine command?

By the utterance of his voice the Lord commanded his people, while yet in the wilderness, to

bring of their most precious things and erect a tabernacle that he might dwell in their midst. So, also, by distinct revelation, through the mouth of his prophet, was Solomon authorized to build that great temple, which, for its architectural magnificence, and for the sublime symbols of the Divine presence and glory that filled and crowned it, became the wonder of the world. And even the second temple was the offspring of that Divine word which said "to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid."

But we may not expect to hear the voice of God uttered from the clouds and darkness of Sinai, or coming down through the parted heavens. Nor does the holy prophet any more come forth, robed with the burning mantle of Divine inspiration, and armed with a "Thus saith the Lord," to bid us build a house for the God of heaven. No, my brethren, God leaves us to interpret his will from his word, and from our own condition and the condition of society around us. Am I possessed of the means of beneficence, and do I see a poor, wretched fellow-mortal hungry, and naked, and pinched with the freezing cold, though Sinai uttered her ten thousand thunders, and though the voice of Divine command came down through the parted heavens, they could not add one jot to the authority and expressiveness of the obligations to minister to the wretched and suffering one.

The fact is, the will of God, ascertained in the light of his word and of providential indications, is as clear and emphatic an enunciation of the Divine

command as though it was written in letters of living light upon the heavens above us.

So, you, brethren, were led to study the will of God in his providential indications. You weighed these providential indications deliberately, thoughtfully. There was a duty to your children; whether you would make your church more inviting and attractive to them; awaken within them a deeper interest and make them feel a deeper reverence for it; whether you would place your little ones by your side in the church of God, and thus make the parental and the domestic bond subservient to the religious; in a word, whether you would create in them the home feeling, and bind them to the Church by the home attachment. There was also a duty to the young people of your flock—a large, intelligent, and gifted class, and of great promise in the future; whether you should give them the *home feeling* in the church, make attractions that should bind them in all coming time, awaken an enterprise that should stimulate their activities and cultivate their gifts, and thus make them more efficient workers for God and humanity. There was also a duty to the community around you; and it became a question of absorbing interest, how you could reach and affect the largest number, and thus not only save the souls of men, but enlist new and powerful agencies in the cause of religion. Again, there was a duty to our beloved Methodism. Regarding it as one of the great agencies, approved of Heaven, for spreading Scriptural holiness and redeeming and saving the world, you could not disregard your obligation to contribute

what you might to ennoble its character and enlarge the sphere of its influence in this great and growing city of the West. All these considerations did you weigh with a calmness indicative of your deliberation, and of your conscientious desire to ascertain the will of God and your duty—considerate to the feelings of those who hesitated and doubted—patient to consider all objections, so that even the objector still found himself bound to you in sympathy and love. Then came a strength of conviction and a tide of feeling which distinctly recognized the voice of God and the call of duty. And should the question be put to-day, “Who hath commanded you to build this house and to make up this wall?” I have no doubt the ready response of your hearts would be, “We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth; at his command these stones are laid; at his command these timbers are placed in the walls; and by his favor the work goeth fast on, and prospereth in our hands.”

3. What kind of a house hath God commanded you to build? “Who hath commanded you to build *this* house?”

This question comes up as one of the elements that must be taken into the account in the determination of the specific duty of a society engaged in such a work. We do not introduce it for the purpose of animadverting upon the style or architecture of the present edifice; but that we may elucidate a principle which should lie at the foundation of all our offerings to the God of heaven. That principle is simply this—*that our offering should be the most*

*perfect we can possibly render.* The most exalted thoughts, and the purest and most ennobling affections, are due unto God. For outward offerings, the people were to take the best fruits of the field, the best lambs of the flock, and the best bullocks of the herd. That is, each man was to take the best of his own possession, and offer it to the Lord.

That is, again, his offering was to rise in excellence and perfection according to the perfection of the products of his own fields and flocks. But, not only in the sacrifices of worship, but also in the *places* where the worship was to be offered, the same principle was observed. The pattern of the tabernacle showed to Moses in the mount, the directions given for its construction and adornment, were such as could "not fail to fix in the minds of Israel the great and important principle—that their richest possessions, such as silver and gold, and their best workmanship, such as carving and embroidery, should be consecrated to his service." The tent and tabernacle were the best offering Israel could then make. But when the great city had been founded, and the palaces of the king and the princes had been reared, David felt the impropriety of dwelling in a house of cedar, while "the ark of God dwelt within curtains." And the temple reared by Solomon was not only more substantial and durable but also more exquisite in its architecture and costly in its material.

This principle—that *man's best offerings should be consecrated to God*—is the same now that it was four thousand years ago. Not that gold and silver, any more than the firstlings of Abel's flocks, are acceptable

to him for their own sakes. The precious metals of the earth are his, and the "cattle upon a thousand hills," but the *spirit of sacrifice* which takes of our possessions and consecrates them to his service he approves—the spirit such as David had, when he said, "Neither will I offer burnt-offerings unto the Lord my God which costs me nothing;" and which would not allow him to rest contented in his palace of cedar "while the ark of the Lord lodged within curtains"—a spirit the very opposite of that which arches and decorates a man's own dwelling; and which surrounds him with gilded ornaments and costly furniture, and yet leaves the house of God in which he worships rude in structure and disproportionate in form. Should you travel through a State and see the people occupying homes that indicate worldly comfort, if not abundance, and then see the school-houses in which their children were educated rude, ragged, and dilapidated—what would be your inference? In such light, let us weigh our obligations to the Church.

Again, there should, as far as practicable, be some correspondence between the object and the building. Why are your high schools, your colleges, your courts of justice, your State capitols made to tower up in the grandeur of architectural proportions? Why? Merely for display? No! There is a nobler purpose than this. It is that they may comport with the dignity of their design; may inspire in the hearts of the people a reverence for the majesty of science, for the administration of justice, and for the honor and dignity of the State. But what grander theme than that

of the Cross of Christ? What science more profound or majestic than the science of salvation? What education of higher dignity or moment than that which trains an immortal for the skies? What edifice, on all the earth, erected by human hands, should more deeply command the respect of the people, and in its very nature be adapted to command that respect, than that which is consecrated as the dwelling-place of the Most High?

We are not contending for exquisite elaboration and expensive ornament in houses of worship. Far from it. The very opposite. Simplicity is the characteristic of beauty; it is characteristic of all the works of God! That beauty, so delicately imprinted upon the architecture of the heavens above us and upon the earth around us, is one of God's agencies for educating the intellectual powers and the moral sentiments of the race. If beauty is opposed to spirituality, why has God filled up his universe with the very perfection of exquisite workmanship and symmetrical beauty? Our religion is emphatically spiritual; but, when God has surrounded us with such wondrous teachings, can we imagine that it must be clothed in rough and repulsive forms in order that its spirituality may be preserved? Can we imagine now, under the dispensation of the Gospel, any more than in the time of David, that it is a mark of spirituality for men to build better houses for themselves than they build for God? Nay, my brethren, the simple principle that *man's best offerings should be consecrated to God*, has remained the same in all ages. This principle simply requires that if we can build only



the log church, we shall select for it the best logs we can get, and God will accept the offering and crown the humble temple with his presence and glory. Shame on the man who will select a better log, burn a better brick, or carve a finer stone for his own house, than for the house of the Lord! And so, in every stage of human society, let men do the best they can—not for pride or vainglory, but because it is God's house; and such offering shall be acceptable in his sight.

Such, I think, is a clear elucidation of the principles involved in this question. Take them home, my brethren, to yourselves; weigh your own enterprise in this light; analyze the motives and principles by which you have been actuated; and if you shall find that they are consistent with this great obligation to the God of heaven and earth, you may confidently expect to realize the crowning blessing indicated in our text: "In all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee."

II. The second branch of general theme is the blessing that shall come upon the temple and those that worship therein. "In all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee." What, then, are the results we are warranted to expect in the erection of temples for the worship of God? What the ends we may hope to realize?

This text implies three things—the Divine acceptance, the Divine presence, and the Divine blessing.

1. The Divine acceptance—*where I record my name.*

This promise was made to Moses, and with direct

reference to the altar upon which sacrifices were to be offered. God had told Moses what kind of an altar he should build, what kind of sacrifices he should lay upon it; and then says: "In all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee." It is clear, then, that specific reference was had to the place where the altar stood—where the lamb bled—and where the smoke of sacrifice ascended. My brethren, there is no altar now, no bleeding lamb, no smoking sacrifice. But does the promise therefore fail? Nay, brethren, this is a most precious legacy to the whole Church of God in all ages. Read it again—"IN ALL PLACES where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee." We now need no altar, because we have no sacrifice and no priest; we have no sacrifice and no priest, because now the altar, the sacrifice, the priest—all center in Him who hath "appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." We see, then, where God now records his name. It is wherever—in every nation and in every place, where He, of whom the altar, the lamb, and the temple were but the type and the sign—Christ crucified is preached as God's only Son and man's only Savior; where the minister points to the only sacrifice that taketh away the sin of the world; it is there that God records his name; comes unto his people and blesses them.

May we not look, then, brethren, that God shall "record his name" in this new temple of worship erected to his praise? So long as Christ and Christ crucified only is preached here—so long as the pure incense of spiritual worship shall go up from sincere

and believing hearts—and God grant that these walls may crumble and perish before any other doctrine is preached, or any other worship offered here!—so long as this is done, you will never, never fail, nor your children that shall come after you, to realize the fulfillment of the promise—“In all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.”

2. The second result is the Divine presence—“I will come unto thee.”

In the history of God's ancient people, the tabernacle and the temple were the peculiar places of the Divine manifestation. It was there that God was pleased to record his name and give to them those manifestations of his presence and favor that filled their hearts with unspeakable joy, and led them to exclaim, “A day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.” And it is in the house of God, in all ages of the world, and in all places wherever a temple has been truly and spiritually consecrated to him, that he has been pleased to record his name and manifest his glorious presence to his people.

When Solomon had completed the magnificent temple at Jerusalem, and, by a solemn act, was about to consecrate it as the dwelling-place of the Most High, awed and overwhelmed by his conceptions of the majesty of the Godhead, he inquires whether it could be possible that God would take up his abode in the house he had built: “But will God, in very deed, dwell with men on the earth? Behold, heaven,

and the heaven of heavens, can not contain thee; how much less this house which I have built!" And yet how soon was the Almighty pleased to scatter his doubts and dissipate his fears! How soon and how distinctly did he respond to the inquiry so doubtingly put forth! For hardly had the solemn rites of consecration ceased—hardly had the voice of prayer died away, when "the fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt-offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the house." Perhaps some of you, beloved brethren, as you have watched the progress of this, your temple of worship, as you have seen its materials gathered together, its foundations laid, its walls reared, and finally the structure opened for the sacred duties of religion, perhaps you have felt the same solicitude that was manifested by the king of Israel. Perhaps it has been your anxious inquiry, Will God condescend to dwell in the temple we have reared? Will it be a place where he will manifest his glory to his people? A place where his power shall be felt and his name recorded? A place where the tear of the mourner shall flow down and the song of the redeemed be heard? And as you have come up to-day to make an offering of this house to the God of hosts, to consecrate it as the dwelling-place of the Most High, have your beating hearts exclaimed, "But will God, in very deed, dwell with men on the earth? Behold, heaven, and the heaven of heavens, can not contain thee; how much less this house which we have built!" My brethren, God can as distinctly answer this question and resolve this doubt

as he did when the assembled hosts of Israel were overwhelmed with his glory. And though no audible voice may ring through the vaulted archway of the sky above us, and no visible flame descend from the highest heavens, yet, upon the altar of our hearts, the holy fire may kindle and burn, and this house be filled with the glory of the Lord. O, thou that dwellest between the cherubim, *shine forth to-day! Shine forth into our hearts as we wait at thy foot-stool; shine forth into this, thy temple, that it may become the house of God, and the gate of heaven to our souls!*

In the first temple the fire which descended from heaven on the day of consecration, and continued to burn as a living flame upon the altar; and the shekinah, a mysterious and supernatural blending of light and shade, over the mercy-seat, and beneath the wings of the cherubim, in the holy of holies, were the peculiar symbols of the Divine presence. During the captivity Jerusalem was wasted and ruined; the temple was desecrated and robbed; the sacrifices ceased, and the holy fire went out upon the altar, and even the holy of holies was pillaged of its sacred deposit, and the shekinah forever departed. The second temple, built by the Jews on their return from Babylon, had indeed its holy of holies, constructed after the pattern of the former; but the ark of the covenant, the tables of stone, the mercy-seat, the divine fire upon the altar, and, above all, the shekinah, the crowning glory of the whole, were never recovered! Was not this the reason why the ancient men, who had seen the first temple in all its glory,

wept when they beheld the second? What was it to them, that it was constructed upon the same site and after the same pattern as the former? Alas, the holy fire no longer burned upon its altar; and the shekinah no longer made its dwelling in the most holy place! Alas, for us, my brethren, when the holy fire no longer burns upon the altars of our spiritual Israel, and the shekinah—the Holy Ghost—ceases to make its abode in the *sanctum sanctorum* of our hearts! We may then have our costly and magnificent edifices of worship—graceful in their proportions, beautiful and imposing in their architecture; their seats may be thronged with refined and wealthy congregations; their vaulted arches may reverberate with the choicest strains of melody; the schools of human learning may contribute eloquent and refined thought to feast the intellect and tickle the fancy of the gathered multitude—and the ceremonies of religion be performed with increasing pomp and splendor. But, alas! the whole would want vitality, and, under its Lethean influence, immortal souls would be lulled into spiritual lethargy, and slumber on till roused by angry surges rolling up upon the dark shores of perdition. The mighty stream of death would lave the very threshold of the sanctuary, and on its bosom immortal souls would be borne from the Church of God to the gates of hell! May God avert so fearful a calamity from our spiritual Israel!

Blessed be God that the promise yet remains: "I will come unto thee!" It is the Divine presence that makes the house of God precious to his saints in all ages. "The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than

all the dwellings of Jacob." Why, then, should we wonder to hear the Christian exclaim with exultant joy: "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem!" In that epitome of divine blessings and of glorious triumphs recorded in the 23d Psalm, the climax of sublime anticipation is reached in the assured confidence—"I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." Brethren, let us never forget that the *gracious* presence—the indwelling of Christ—constitutes the life of the Church. I protest to you, before God to-day, that I would rather preach salvation to dying men in the meanest and darkest hovel, cheered and assured by the presence of Christ, than in the most gorgeous temple where Christ's gracious presence was not. The promise of God to the Jews was, "that the glory of the latter house should be greater than of the former;" because "the desire of all nations shall come"—not as in the old temple, by sign and symbol, but as a personal presence—God manifest in the flesh. My brethren, the symbols—the bleeding lamb, the smoking altar, the mysterious shekinah—are not here. But the promise—*I will come unto thee*—remains forever. "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in." Come in, thou King of glory, into this temple to-day. Dwell here—not merely in the sacrament, in the prayer, the sacred song, and in the doctrinal truth, but, O, dwell here *a spiritual presence*. Then shall be realized in this place what was proclaimed with a loud voice from heaven: "Behold the

tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them and be their God."

3. Finally, a third result is the Divine blessing—"And I will bless thee."

It is much to have the Divine presence—to feel that the King eternal and immortal is with us! But, O, to have him come unto us for such a purpose—to *bless us*—to satisfy our souls with the goodness of his house—is a condescension that fills even the angels of heaven with wonder and with praise.

He will bless you with the unfolding and the indwelling of that word which consists not in the letter only, but its *spirit, life*. What a wondrous revelation is that! What depth of sympathy for the suffering and the lost; what words of hope to the guilty and despairing; how rich in promise to the penitent; what a store-house of comfort to the believer; how inspiring to his faith; with what mighty strength does it gird him for his pilgrimage; what victories over sin does it insure; what triumphs over the powers of darkness; what glorious illumination and safe conduct in the dark valley; and what heavenly bliss beyond! Amid the din and uproar of the world—when the heart is sad and the soul weary—you may come up to this house, drink from the living fountain, rise refreshed, and go forth with new vigor to battle the stern elements of the worldly conflict, and to struggle onward and upward for the heavenly prize. As in the workshop of the lapidary, the jewel is cut and polished till it is made to stud a monarch's crown, so here, in this sanctuary, shall



the Holy Spirit polish and beautify immortal souls that shall sparkle like diamonds in the crown of the dear Redeemer.

May this house be the battle-field of many a conflict waged against the power of darkness—the scene of many a glorious triumph of the cross of Christ! May it be the city of refuge to many a weary and heavy-laden sinner; the birthplace of many an immortal soul; the house of prayer, where many a deathless spirit, freed from the corruptions of sin, shall bear witness to the sanctifying of the blood of Jesus, and plume its pinions for the skies! May it be the threshold of glory, the gate of heaven to many a believer! Long after these men and women of God, who have given to this work their means, their labors, and their prayers shall have gone to their rest, may these walls continue to stand—with the recorded name of the Eternal still uneffaced and glorious—filled with the Divine presence and enriched with the Divine blessing! Here may the light of eternity forever brightly shine! Here may multitudes upon multitudes in all coming generations be trained not only for the service of God on earth, but for the work and the joy of heaven, that in the distant ages of eternity many an immortal spirit, radiant with heavenly light, and shining among the thrones of heaven, shall look back with joyful recollection to this place as having been to them “the house of God and the gate of heaven!”

My brethren, this is to be the *Sabbath home* of yourselves and your children. It is the consecrated place where you shall feast upon the life-giving word

of the dear Redeemer, where you shall enjoy the communion of the saints, and, above all, where in an especial manner you shall enjoy a Divine presence—the presence of your living Head. It is the sacred place where the water of sprinkling shall welcome your children to the blessings of the covenant of their and your Lord. It is where you are to be nurtured and trained for the worship and service of that higher and nobler temple, the house of God, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

May your Heavenly Father satisfy you with the goodness of his house—even of his holy temple! May you, and the generations who shall worship in this house after you, realize, from Sabbath to Sabbath in all coming time, the precious fulfillment of the Divine promise, “In all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee!”

## XVII.

## A THANKSGIVING DISCOURSE.

DELIVERED IN MORRIS CHAPEL, CINCINNATI, DECEMBER 7, 1865.

*"Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise: be thankful unto Him, and bless His name." Psalm c, 4.*

IN obedience to the call of the Chief Executive of the State and the Nation, we are assembled in the house of God to offer public thanksgiving for the blessings that have crowned the year.

Had we a National Church vested with a semi-official character and function, we might look upon the movement as one of State or National policy; and it would thus be divested of much of its spiritual character and its moral significance. But no such Church exists. Over every Church the Government spreads the ægis of its protecting care; but no one is so interwoven with the machinery of the Government itself as to become a part and parcel of the National policy.

The movement of this day, then, is evidently a religious movement, springing from the deep, moral, and religious conviction of the people, and reaching up to the Executive head of the State and Nation, just as our liberties spring from, and are maintained

by, the people ; so the grand spectacle exhibited this day, of nearly thirty States in their sovereign capacity, and the whole Nation, wherever true allegiance is found, assembling to pour out thanksgiving for individual and National blessings, finds both its origin and its manifestation in the will and the purpose of the American people. It is the voice of the people, saying : "Come and let us worship God ; let us enter into his house with thanksgiving, and fill his courts with praise."

How, then, may we best improve the hour, so as to secure the ends for which we are assembled, and meet the requirements of the day ? The discussion of some of the great principles that underlie the fabric of our social and civil institutions, might, indeed, be pertinent and instructive ; as might also the presentation and enforcement of the peculiar duties imposed upon us by the stirring events of the present time. But it shall be ours this morning to attempt to bring our hearts into more complete sympathy with the objects of the day, and to inspire a deeper gratitude, and call forth a loftier devotion, by reciting some of the personal and National blessings that should swell our thanksgiving, and fill the courts of the Lord's house with our songs of praise on this auspicious day.

1. First, then, let us be grateful that we live to greet another day of thanksgiving.

It is no small thing that we live. The agencies of death have been around us all the year. Their work has been going on. Myriads of our race have passed away amid all the variety of woe. Youth and

strength have withered at the cold touch of death, and the voice of gladness has become silent in the grave forever. When we consider how complicated the machinery of our bodies is—the fine and delicate parts of which it is composed, and that the disturbance of any one of them is sufficient to disarrange and destroy the whole system—and then when we look at the innumerable causes of disease and death surrounding us at every moment—as it were, death itself watching with sleepless eye at every gateway of life—the wonder is not that so many die so soon, but that any live so long.

During the year past we have seen death descending upon hoary age, and with all the hoarded treasures of wisdom and knowledge, it has passed away. We have seen its shaft gleaming across the horizon of life, and the strong man has bowed himself to rise no more. We have looked down into the grave of youth and beauty, and heard the muffled sound of the clods as they fell upon blighted joys and coffined hopes. Still we live! A thousand shafts, sent forth on their mission of death, have darkened the air all around us; but we have stood unharmed amid them all. A thousand perils have fallen harmless at our feet. The shield of the Almighty has been round about us, and our defense has been sure.

And then, too, let us bear in mind how ill deserving we have been of all this care! How selfish have been our aims! How worldly our objects! How little we have thought of God! How little we have done for God! And yet God has spared us; spread over us the shield of his protection; nurtured us with

unceasing care, and brought us safely through all the varied scenes of another year! Let us, then, enter into his courts with thanksgiving and with songs of praise!

2. Domestic and family blessings are another cause for joy and thanksgiving.

Look out upon society. Into how many a family circle has the grim monster entered to execute his commission of death! The rose has faded upon the cheek of beauty. The features of loved ones, ever beaming with intelligence and overspread with the warm glow of affection, have become transfixed and chilled to the whiteness of cold and icy marble. Bereavement and sorrow have darkened all the dwelling, and breaking hearts have uttered their moans of agony by the graves of the loved and the lost.

The son of promise and of hope—the child that was to be the light to the dim eye and strength to the palsied limbs of age—the child that was to bear the family name and honor to the future! Alas! he is not. Untimely was the hour that ended his brief life, and now breaking hearts follow him down to the grave. The daughter of loveliness and affection, whose charm, like that of an angelic presence, diffused the beauty and fragrance of holy love throughout the dwelling; the little child, like a blooming flower, whose beauty received inimitable touches from the pencil of the skies—the sweet cherub lent to earth to remind us of heaven's purity—filling the whole house with joy, and kindling affections lovely as they were heaven-like! Alas! they are not. The

blight of death has fallen upon that picture of purity and blotted it out forever.

But, beloved, is it ours to come with unbroken households before God to-day? Are our sons and our daughters yet with us? Are our home joys as yet unmarred? is the light of our dwellings still undimmed by any of those sad bereavements by which earth's joys are blighted and human hearts are bruised and broken? Are your heart-treasures as yet all with you? Then, as you look around upon them, and the sight gladdens the eye, let it also warm your heart with gratitude to the great Preserver of your blessings, and inspire your songs of joy and thanksgiving.

But look abroad again. In how many homes does poverty—care-consuming, pinching poverty—make its permanent abode! Daily toil scarcely suffices to provide for daily wants. The humblest and coarsest fare is all that is craved, and that, alas! often craved in vain. How often does the very image of poverty, thinly clad, shivering in the Winter's cold, with hasty step and averted eye, glide past us upon all our streets! Go to the desolate, cheerless home of want; mark its nakedness of all that is essential to home comfort; think how hard those parents toil, and how little they earn; how much those children need, and how little they have. And as you stand there amid that scene of poverty and want, as you feel the pressure of their necessities, and your heart yearns toward them, ask thyself, "Who has made them to differ, and what hast thou which thou hast not received?" Ought not this

thought to inspire our hearts with gratitude and call forth our thanksgiving for the temporal blessings we enjoy?

Look abroad once more. In how many homes are there growing up children, careless, wayward, selfish, and sinful! It may be the result of failure in duty or lack of capability on the part of parents; it may result from an injudicious use of the gifts of fortune, for how often are children ruined from this cause! or it may be from the natural perverseness of the children themselves, yielding more and still more to the promptings of evil passions or the allurements of sensual pleasures, till all that was true, and noble, and hopeful in their character has given place to all that is base, and sinful, and damning! The yearning affection of parents is repaid with ingratitude; their prayers and pleadings are all in vain; the fond hopes they cherished in the infancy of their children, though nurtured by all the assiduity of a parent's love, one by one expire, till all are perished and dead. O, the skeleton that hangs in such a house! What can so chill and pain a parent's heart? Poverty, and sickness, and death, even to the dearest objects of our love; are blessings by the side of such a sorrow as this.

Beloved, have you children, dutiful, affectionate, and true? Are there those in your little home-flock, in whom are seen the buddings of a noble character, aspirations after whatsoever things are pure and of good report? Have you even one child of whom you can say, This, my son, or my daughter, will neither disappoint nor desert me in the future? then,



happy are you. That child is worth more to you, will afford you more substantial comfort, and is to-day a higher cause of gratitude and thanksgiving to the God of heaven than if golden treasures had been poured into your lap.

3. The abundant productions of the earth, filling the land with plenty, and supplying abundant food for man and beast, is another cause for thanksgiving on the part of all the people.

It was a beautiful custom of the Jews to bring the first fruits of the harvest as a thank-offering to God. And when "the fruit of the land" had been gathered, then came the "feast of tabernacles," celebrated with joy and thanksgiving through an entire week. With "boughs of goodly trees," such as the palm, the willow, and the myrtle, tied together by gold and silver cords, held aloft in their hands, the people marched into the temple and around the altar, singing *Hosanna!* From this beautiful custom the Revelator draws that sublime imagery by which he would portray the bliss of the saints in heaven, standing before the throne, "clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands," and singing with a loud voice, "Salvation to our God!" So among us, "the harvest home" has been a day of gladness and festivity. The orator and the poet have not deemed it an occasion unworthy of their inspiration.

How fitting, then, that, as Christians, recognizing that it is God who has crowned the year with his goodness, we should come before him with thanksgiving and praise! Indeed, as a people, we are a marvel to ourselves. More than a million of our

men have been drawn away from the ordinary pursuits of life, and by far the greater portion of them from the peaceful pursuits of agriculture, by the stern necessities of war. Hundreds of thousands, tempted by the lure of gold, are scattered all over our almost boundless interior territories—scaling the summits of the Rocky Mountains, threading the vast, barren, alkaline, and sandy wastes of the great inland desert, penetrating deep down into the bowels of the Sierra Nevadas—to develop the golden treasures scattered all over those vast regions and imbedded by the God of nature in the everlasting rocks.

Who would have supposed that all this drain could have been made upon us without an exhaustion and failure of our agricultural resources? But, thanks be to God, no where has he suffered us to fail or permitted us to want. Our beautiful and boundless prairies, our “bottom lands” of exhaustless fertility, still teem with their overflowing abundance. Every acre of our broad, almost boundless domain is still made to yield its tribute and swell the overflowing abundance of our land. Indeed, by the appliances of art to agriculture, human labor has, in a great measure, been supplanted by mechanical ingenuity. The human brain has supplied whatever was lacking in human muscle. Then, too, our vast mineral resources have opened a field of activity and enterprise, which abundantly repay the toil and care of the laborer.

All our manufacturing interests and commercial enterprises have been prosecuted with almost unequalled success. The sound of famine, and pestilence,

and the desolations of war have been heard in the distance; but, staid by the merciful hand of God—held in abeyance by his omnipotent power—it has not come nigh thee.

It is a sublime thought, and one that may challenge our gratitude and adoration, that, through so many ages, God has presided over the course of the seasons, causing them to bring forth their fruits in unvarying order. The stability of the heavens and the consistency of the seasons are wonderful demonstration of the unchanging God.

4. But perhaps the most prominent cause for National thanksgiving—the cause that makes the strongest appeal to the heart, and stirs most deeply the emotions of the soul—at this hour, is the restoration of peace to our beloved land.

For four long years there has swept over the land a bloody and desolating civil war, such as no nation in all the history of the world has ever witnessed—a war that, for a time, made the very foundations of the Republic tremble—a war where was poised in the scale not merely the freedom of four millions of the enslaved of our own land, but the great principle of self-government in all lands. This war has ended in the triumph of our National arms. That triumph has been so complete, so decisive, as to settle for all coming time the great questions of secession and rebellion. The thunder-storm that threatened to engulf all that was dear to us as a nation—whether in the history of the past, the liberties of the present, or the hopes of the future—has swept over us in its desolating course; but its force is

spent; and now, amid the almost preternatural stillness that has succeeded the roar of the tempest, the bright sun of peace breaks through the rifted cloud of war and gilds the land with the gladness of its golden rays.

A little while ago, every thing that was great and good seemed to be in peril—*almost lost!* But now the fabric of American liberties has settled down upon foundations, firm as the everlasting hills! The institutions purchased for us by the toil and blood of our fathers—now purified by the shock of war, as the atmosphere is purified by the shock of the thunderstorm—shall stand forth firmer and brighter, the home of liberty, the asylum of the oppressed in all the coming ages.

As the year ushered in, the whole land trembled beneath the martial tread of contending foes. There were the hurryings forth of sires, husbands, and sons—followed with the tears, and prayers, and benedictions of loving hearts. Alas! many of them went forth to return no more. Their precious dust molders beneath the soil redeemed by their valor, and consecrated to liberty forever by their blood. As the year was ushered in, dark portents skirted along the sky, filling many hearts with doubt and dread. Now all these have passed away, and the blessed sunlight of peace has dawned upon all the land.

From this grand summit of our elevation, then, may we look back upon the past and recount the causes of thanksgiving in all the steps through which God has led us. We should be thankful that,

when the war came, there was still social and political virtue enough left to save the nation. We should be thankful for the noble men who, with hearts all aglow with burning patriotism, rushed to the field of carnage and of death to save the life of the nation. They were no hirelings, merely sent forth to do the bidding of despotic power, but they were freemen, nurtured in the school of liberty, and their memories shall forever live as the worthy champions of liberty's holy cause.

We should be thankful that, after many untimely births of short-lived generals, the insignificance of whose achievements now only live to be placed in sober contrast with the grandeur of their pretensions—we say that we should be thankful that, when the generals of the gaudy plume and the grand review had sported their brief day, there came up the sturdy champions of the fight—men who, in deeds, surpassed all the achievements of the heroes of the olden time; men worthy of the cause for which they fought; men worthy of the heroes they led forth to battle and to victory. Such was he that scaled the mountain's rugged sides in defiance of the leaden hail, and planted the victorious banner of his country above the clouds. Such was he who, “twenty miles away,” scented the battle upon the gale, and by that marvelous ride, arrested the flying fragments of his broken army, and, single-handed, plucked victory from the very jaws of defeat. Such was he who, in that splendid “march to the sea,” eclipsed the famous march of the ten thousand Greeks in ancient history, and cut his swath of devastation forty miles

in width, four hundred miles through the very heart of rebeddom. Such was he, the sturdy hero of a hundred battles, who, amid horrors that would have daunted the bravest generals, fought it out upon the steady line of heroic purpose, till the last armed foe of his country was compelled to yield to the prowess of his arms.

Yes, thank God for such men as Thomas, and Butler, and Hooker, and Sheridan, and Sherman, and Grant—names forever illustrious in the annals of their country's history!

But there was one America can never forget. In our earlier struggle for liberty, God gave a Washington to the American people. In the great struggle for the consolidation and final establishment of those liberties, God gave us an Abraham Lincoln. With an honest purpose "to follow the right as God had given him to see the right," he toiled on through the long years of bloody strife, waging an undying warfare against "armed treason," but with his great heart all the while "void of malice to any," and yearning to lift from the repenting rebel the calamities his treason had heaped upon him. Already had the day-dawn of triumph broken upon the land, and his weary eye brightened as he beheld his "big job," to use his own homely but expressive phrase, completed. But, like Moses of old, it was his to lead the people through the sea of blood and the wilderness of strife, but not to enter the promised land. Another sacrifice was demanded, that the fiendish spirit of the rebellion might be made to stand out in all its naked deformity before the civilized world, and

Abraham Lincoln fell a martyr to his great work and his holy cause. Illustrious martyr! A nation's tears, warm and gushing from the heart, bedewed his pathway to the tomb; and we hail his memory as that of a second Washington, sent by God to be the savior of the nation. The great crowning act of his life—the culminating point in the great contest—was that immortal proclamation which knocked the shackles from every bondman in all the land, and said to four millions of the enslaved—*be free—be men!*

Now, in the winding up of the great contest, we must not wonder if many who have been in rebellion fail to comprehend the magnanimity with which they have been treated. They have not yet comprehended the blackness and baseness of their own crime. Light will break in upon them by and by. Nor must we wonder that, though thoroughly defeated and humbled, the *spirit* of secession outlives its power, and that men, with empty bravado and impotent malice, show what they would still be glad to do had they the power. We must have patience with such. Time will, ere long, soften their asperity; a new and better civilization will force into the current of their thought juster ideas and better feelings; and, at all events, they will find that their freaks of folly and madness, while they are powerless as against the nation, only hedge up their own path of reconstruction, now so ardently desired. Strong as is the nation, not only in the prowess of her arms, but in all those elements of greatness that command respect among the nations of the earth, she can afford to be patient, and magnanimous, and

painstaking, without fearing that the reins of justice will slip from her grasp.

Our civil war has exhibited another marvel to the old dynasties of kingly rule. With them mighty armies are at the very foundation of government, and the military service is a life-profession. The *soldier* and the *citizen* form distinct classes—often a deep and broad gulf separating between them. Not so with us. One of the grandest spectacles of the war is the ready return, at its close, of the great army of freedom to the peaceful pursuits of civil life. Within the brief period of a few months nearly one million of men have laid aside the insignia of war, resumed the ordinary duties of life, and are now proud to be known simply as American citizens. Such a spectacle has been exhibited in no other nation on the face of the earth. While, then, it may make us justly proud of those institutions that have brought forth such results, it should also inspire us with profound gratitude to Him whose providence has so signally watched over and guarded the destinies of the Republic.

5. But, above all, let us rejoice and praise God to-day that, through the years of war and desolation, the Church of Christ has preserved her vitality, and, instead of being demoralized and weakened, as we all apprehended, she has multiplied her agencies, augmented her resources, and enlarged her work. Thanks be to God! Never before did so wide a field, or one so rich in promise, spread out before her, and never before did she exhibit the spirit of aggressiveness and the liberality to meet all the



demands of the work that she exhibits now. Had we come out of this war with our Churches enfeebled, demoralized, and wasted, there would have been cause of alarm. We might have apprehended that the foundations of moral virtue in the State had become undermined, and that the ultimate ruin of the nation was inevitable. But how gloriously has Christianity shone forth in all the conflict, not only in the lofty patriotism that sent the Christian warrior to the field, but also in that milder form in which, as an angel of mercy, she sought to and succeeded in mitigating the horrors of war, and mingling into the elements of ruin and death the counteracting influences of faith, and love, and hope. Had we come out of the conflict with our Churches demoralized and ruined, we might after all have doubted whether our victories were not dearly bought. But, thanks be to God, though he has led us through seas of blood, he has preserved alike the integrity of the Church and the Republic!

Providence has, indeed, marked our every stage of progress, as recognizable in those defeats that schooled the conscience and heart of the loyal people, and brought them at last into recognition of the great principles of human brotherhood that were essential to our success, as in those victories that sealed the death of rebellion. Providence, indeed, crops out in the little as well as the grand events of the war. And now may we sing, as did Israel upon the banks of deliverance, "Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power; thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed to pieces the enemy."

Then, too, while from one summit-level we look back upon the past, and count all the steps of the way in which the Lord our God has led us, we may also behold the glorious future with the foul blot of slavery removed, its poison no longer cursing our civilization and corrupting our politics; the undermining heresy of State rights uncovered and forever rebuked; our National elements of strength consolidated and demonstrated; labor, industry dignified and ennobled; human rights held sacred in all men, and freedom guaranteed to the meanest and poorest upon the soil, whether black or white; with thought free, religion untrammelled, and education universal; with a country unparalleled for its extent, the fertility of its soil, the variety of its climate and productions, the extent and richness of its mineral resources, its facilities for inland navigation, and its broad invitation to the oppressed of all lands to come and share with us this glorious boon of bounteous Providence. Who can estimate what shall be the future of our National heritage? Imagination fails to conceive; language is inadequate to describe the possibilities of the future of our great Republic.

Let us, then, offer thanksgiving for such an inestimable boon. Let us pray that it may be perpetuated, only growing more illustrious in all the true elements of National greatness; bestowing richer blessings upon its ever-teeming millions of loyal and loving subjects, and towering up among the nations of the earth as the beacon-light of liberty and truth to all men.

## XVIII.

THE ABLE MINISTER OF THE NEW  
TESTAMENT.

AN ANNIVERSARY DISCOURSE, DELIVERED BEFORE THE METHODIST  
GENERAL BIBLICAL INSTITUTE, NOV. 7, 1849.

*"Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament."*  
2 Corinthians iii, 6.

AT your request, I stand before you this evening. I recognize in your body a company of young men who are soon to enter upon the work of the Christian ministry. Whatever concerns ministerial character and usefulness concerns you; and whatever can enlarge your views of the magnitude, the responsibilities, and the requirements of the sacred office can not be devoid of interest and profit to you. Allow me, then, to talk with you upon subjects interesting and important both to you and me. Were I to while away this hour in attempts at wire-drawing and hair-splitting in theologic speculation, or in endeavoring to sound the depths of some logical gulf, I might possibly give you a good idea of my acuteness as a metaphysician, and of my power of critical delineation. My thoughts might be honored as being profound and original, but my conscience

would tell me that I had set before you a poor example, and that, instead of employing what is, perhaps, one of the most responsible hours of my life, in giving you a just view of your great work, and of the character to which you should aspire, I had seduced you into a love of speculative disquisition, which would chill your souls like an iceberg, and render your ministry as dry and as barren as the wastes of Sahara.

I know not that I can occupy your time more to your personal edification than by attempting the development of the character of an "able minister," as presented by one well qualified to make the estimate and to give the representation. I would invite your attention, then, to the Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, third chapter, and sixth verse: *"Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament."*

I hope it may not seem amiss to you that I have entered upon a theme so vast in its importance, so comprehensive in its range of topics, and so momentous in its relations to the general results of God's truth in the world. I speak not, brethren, as one who has attained. I place before myself, no less than before you, the high standard to which the Gospel minister should constantly aspire. And should any of you become impressed with higher views of your calling, and nerved with firmer resolve, by the grace of God, to excel in ministerial character and work, I shall not have spoken nor you have heard in vain.

The "sufficiency" of the Christian minister is always "of God." The apostle Paul—had it been

convenient to boast—might have pointed to his natural endowments, to his educational acquirements, to his divine and commanding eloquence, and to the “living epistles” of his ministry. But he hesitates not to acknowledge—we are not sufficient of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God. Our text, then, is no expression of vain boasting on the part of the apostle. He is not laying claim, either for himself or for his brethren, to any superiority of talents, of learning, or of signal ability. It is a confession of inability, of insufficiency for the work. It is a distinct avowal that, considering the great difficulty and high responsibility of the work of the ministry, no order of talents and no order of requirements, without the grace of God, could render a man sufficient for it. But still he does claim that God had supplied his lack, and had made him fit or suitable for the work.

In developing our subject we purpose, first, to point out some of the essential elements in the character of an able minister of the New Testament; and, secondly, to lead you forward to the inquiry, how this character may be attained.

I. By “essential elements,” we mean those traits of character which are indispensable in forming an able minister. These traits, however, we warn you, may not always be the most showy and popular. A man without them, or at least destitute of some of them, may be not only popular, but, under certain circumstances, eminently successful. He must, however, necessarily fail when tried by those ordeals which are the true tests of ministerial character, just

as the base metal, notwithstanding its luster and faultless stand, will discover its alloy when subjected to its proper test.

1. The first essential element we shall mention is, that he must be a man of God.

*He must be a renewed man—an experimental Christian.* The apostle affirms that his ministry did not consist in mere verbal criticisms, to develop the literal meaning of the text, but that it possessed spirituality—life. He was a minister, not of the “letter” only, but of the “Spirit.” I can scarcely conceive of a greater absurdity than that of employing unrenewed men in the ministry of a spiritual Gospel. I would as soon employ a blind man to describe the varied blending of light and shade in a painting of high artistical skill, or the deaf man to explain the various combinations of sound in music. How can he explain the nature of that which he has no power to comprehend? or enforce the spiritual requisitions of religion when its vital energy has never been realized in his own soul? In fine, how can he unfold the beauties of experimental godliness when his own eyes have never yet been opened to behold the interior glories of the great temple of spiritual life? A man may have clear perceptions of intellectual truth, a sound, discriminating judgment, but how can he comprehend the spirituality of the Gospel unless his own heart has been imbued with its living power? The voice of God, the whole history of the Church, and the very nature of the Gospel, all require that he who teaches must first be taught.

*Again, he must be a man of deep and consistent piety.* No shallow experience in Christianity will suffice the minister of Jesus Christ. He must have drank deeply from that fountain whose living waters he administers to others. It is not enough that he be eloquent in speech, amiable in temper, courteous and affable in manners. All these qualities he needs ; but more than these, he needs the adornment of deep piety and of a pure life. He must be a man of faith and prayer. Christ must be the model of his character and the pattern of his life. From the unfailing well of salvation he must draw those living waters that impart moral health and purity, and life to those who wait upon his ministry. Any thing short of this would diffuse through the Church of God spiritual barrenness and death. The ministry itself would soon become a moral blight and curse to the world. Want of spirituality on the part of the ministry would beget want of spirituality in the Church ; and soon might it be said to such a Church and such a ministry, as our Savior said to the Jews, "It is written, my house shall be called the house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves." Neither talents nor learning, neither lofty eloquence nor commanding diction, can supersede the necessity of practical godliness in a preacher of righteousness. Though we speak with the tongues of men and of angels, though we have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, without practical godliness all our eloquence will be but as a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.

*He must be called by God to the ministerial work.*

“No man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.” By being called of God, we mean that he must be inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon himself the office and work of the Christian ministry. Thousands who have talents, and who are not wanting in piety and devotion to the cause of God, have never been called to the work of the ministry. Providence has opened to them other spheres of labor and usefulness. Others with smaller talents are thrust out into the work of the ministry, and made heralds of salvation—showing that the work is of God, and the instrumentality must be of his own choosing. He that enters this work from any other motive—be it honor, or popularity, or a livelihood—than a solemn conviction that he is called of God, is guilty of desecrating the most sacred office and profaning the altar of God. Like Nadab and Abihu, he offers “strange fire before the Lord.” “You had better be the offscouring of all flesh, than preach to gain the applause of your fellow-worms. You had better beg your bread than enter the ministry as a trade to live by. However those may live who act from no higher principle, it will be dreadful dying for them, and more dreadful appearing before their judge.” Rather say with the apostle, “For though I preach the Gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel!”

*He must have surrendered himself unto the work.* A practical example is given to the Christian minister in the determination of the early apostles—“we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the



ministry of the word." His should be no half-hearted devotion. With the apostle Paul, he should be able to say, "I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die for the name of the Lord Jesus." And do difficulties rise in his way ; are sacrifices to be made, dangers to be braved, perils to be encountered, privations to be endured, and deaths to be suffered, he should be ready to exclaim, "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God."

"'T is not a work of small import  
The pastor's care demands,  
But what might fill an angel's heart,  
And filled a Savior's hands."

Minister of God, keep thee to thy work ! Do the busy babbling tongues of applause attempt to seduce thee from thy course ? Let thine ear be deaf to their voice. Heed not the glittering gold. Listen not to the siren song of ease. Falter not, though crowns should glitter in thy view to tempt thee. Thou art thy God's and heaven's ! Thou laborest for higher praise than mortal tongues can sound. The gold of the celestial city is the treasure thou aimest at ; thine ease, the angels' song ; thy crown, the gemmed trophy of redeemed souls ! Thou art a co-worker with angels and with God ! Earth has no higher honor ; heaven no richer reward !

2. A second element in the character of an able minister is, that he should be a man of sound sense. "For God hath not given unto us the spirit of fear,

but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." This is an endowment which is claimed for the Christian minister by the great apostle. A man may possess unquestionable piety, great devotion to the cause of God—nay, in addition to these, he may possess high literary attainments, and yet he may be so wanting in that "sound mind" of the apostle, as completely to destroy his influence, and render him inefficient in the ministry.

*A man of sound mind will take just views of things.* He will comprehend the nature and duties of his office. Sound sense will characterize his ministry. Some seem to imagine, that to possess the great elements of ministerial character, it is only necessary to have a warm heart, a clear voice, and a ready tongue. No matter how recreant to a sound orthodoxy, how wanting in reason, how uncouth in manner, or how unwarrantable the license with which sacred things are handled, that "sound mind" enjoined by the apostle, leading a man to take just views of things, will be a corrective of all these defects of ministerial character. The man who possesses it, will not be wasting his strength in the pursuit of wild vagaries of the imagination, but he will ground himself upon the vital and practical doctrines of the Gospel. Instead of searching for themes on which his fancy may soar, his wit sparkle, and his eloquence glow, he will go to the great central point of the Gospel system—the Cross of Christ. This mighty theme will pervade and inspire his whole ministry. From this elevated position he will look out over the whole range of Gospel truth, and thus

his character and his ministry will stand in beautiful harmony with the grand design of the sacred office.

*A man of sound mind will also understand human nature.* There are thousands who are sound in the scholarship of books, but who seem to know nothing further. They are sound in theology—stating every principle with logical exactness, according to the most approved formula of the schools—beautiful theorists—wise in the *letter* of the truth ; but yet unable to turn their wisdom to any practical account. They have no access to the hearts of men ; their sympathy is all with abstractions—the dry formula of theologic indication ; nor have they any power to popularize or adapt to humanity the discussion of the most momentous truth. Hence, their learning, arguments, and eloquence fail to accomplish any good—nay, they have scarcely vitality enough to awaken a decent opposition ; and they continue, by sufferance, to beat the air with increasing zeal and energy.

To be successful, the Christian minister must be able to read *men* as well as *books*. Having surveyed all the avenues to the human heart, he must be able to enter its citadel, and subjugate it to the dominion of truth ; without this knowledge of human nature, classical and scientific learning will be of little value. This was one of the conspicuous elements in the character of the great apostle to the Gentiles, beautifully co-working with the high attainments of a noble intellect, and the sanctified graces of a pure spirit, in producing the great results of his ministry.

*A man of sound mind will also be eminently practical.* He will “plant” and “water,” not speculate

and theorize. Like "a wise master-builder," he will build upon the foundation "that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." The mind of man is diseased—"the whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint." The Christian minister is the appointed physician to convey heaven's medicine to the soul. Will you heal the sick by discoursing to him upon the theory of medicine? Nay, "the balm of Gilead" must be applied to the sick and dying man. Would you save the drowning man by theorizing to him upon the properties of water, and explaining the doctrine of specific gravity? Nay, you must rush to the rescue—the life-boat must be run out upon the deep, and there must you struggle till you have plucked from the watery element the drowning man. "To save souls" is the great work of the Christian minister; and if he would not fight uncertainly, "as one that beateth the air," he must be practical.

*Nothing can serve as a substitute for this sound mind.* No, not even the highest order of literary acquirements or of piety. You would not intrust to the man not possessed of this sound sense, even any worldly interest that required wisdom, experience, and intelligence; why then will you commit to such a one a spiritual trust of such magnitude, and requiring such wisdom, discretion, and faithfulness? It is to me a painful reflection, that so many, even in the Church, seem to regard weakness of mind no serious obstacle to admission into the sacred office, provided the candidate possess a decent degree of piety and assurance to *talk*. Such a procedure rests upon a wholly false assumption with regard to the

qualifications essential for the work. It requires something more than *feeble goodness*. The cause will often be judged by the advocate. A weak advocate will make even a strong cause weak ; and thus religion is often dishonored, and shorn of its power and influence.

3. A third element is, that he should be a man of firmness and stability of character.

*He needs firmness and stability to give character and efficiency to his labors.* How aptly has an apostle described “unstable souls,” as “clouds without water, carried about of winds !” They flit along the sky, but drop no refreshing showers upon the earth. A man who has no fixed and correct principles of action—“no opinion of his own,” or, if he has, and yet lacks the decision of character to maintain it, but is constantly bowing to this man’s whim, and that man’s conceit—such a man will make but a tortuous path. The ministry is the last business in which he should engage. Alas, for him ! he will soon find that influence, character, and usefulness are all gone. Though he may combine in his character every other natural and educational endowment, his energies will be paralyzed, and it may be said of him, as of the first-born of Jacob—“unstable as water, thou shalt not excel.”

*He needs firmness and stability, that he may not be borne down by the opposition of the world.* “Marvel not,” says our Savior to his disciples, “if the world hate you.” Human nature is the same in its opposition to Christ that it ever has been. It is the business of the man of God to rebuke the world’s wickedness, to expose its depravity, to dissect the

moral man, and lay open the mass of rottenness and death—to tear away the whited exterior of the sepulcher, that within it may be cleansed and purified. Imagine not that this can be done—faithfully, thoroughly done—and the world make no opposition and feel no resentment. The preacher may indeed be permitted to discourse, in general terms, upon the sins and follies of men, and the multitude not be offended; but when he charges home upon them their specific, indulged, cherished sins; when he takes the vail from their eyes, and, with the stern fidelity of Nathan to David, exclaims, “thou art the man!” “marvel not” if they exclaim, as Ahab said of Micaiah, “I hate him, for he does not prophesy good concerning me, but evil.” The faithful minister can not shrink from his responsibility; he is shut up to the declaration of God’s truth. What though he have to complain with the prophet—“Judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the streets, and equity can not enter; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey.” All this he may feel; but still is he to heed the command of God—“Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins.” This is a work for which the Christian minister must have nerve and courage. He must feel, as did Jeremiah, “His word was in my heart, as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and could not stay” While the counsels of the wicked prevail—nerved with holy zeal and with a divine courage—he will not forget his

responsibility to a power higher than that of man. The language of his heart will be—

“ Shall I to soothe the unholy throng,  
Softener thy truth, or smoother my tongue ?  
Awed by a mortal's frown, shall I  
Conceal the Word of God, Most High ?”

No, what though thou fallest a martyr to thy work ; thou fallest as did thy Lord. And from the noisome cell, the gibbet's torture, or the burning stake, shall thy spirit soar away, and amid angel welcomes seize the everlasting crown.

*Again, he must be a man of firmness and decision, that he may resist the encroachments of error.* When error and delusion, like a mighty flood, are sweeping over the land, the minister of God must stand like a bulwark to resist the onset. He is the sentinel of heaven ; and for every spy that steals into the camp of Israel, through his unwatchfulness, he must give account. The bewildered and excited multitude may denounce him ; even his own familiar friends, his brethren in the Church, may lift up the heel against him ; wealth, influence, power, may all be enlisted on the side of error. How noble the position of him who then stands firm for his “ God and the right !” How worthy the example of a Lot, preserving his integrity amid the pollutions of Sodom ! How affecting the picture of an Elijah, maintaining his integrity when all Israel had been led astray, the altars of God digged down, and his prophets slain ! When the infamous king Uzziah “ went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense upon the altar,” thus invading the priestly office, and desecrating the sanctuary of God,

the high-priest withstood even the king, and commanded him to "go out of the sanctuary," and even "thrust him out thence." Such is the incorruptible purity, the inflexible integrity, and the unbending firmness that shed luster upon the sacred office and character.

*Never were these qualities more needed than at the present day.* The powers of darkness seem making their final onset against the kingdom of heaven. From the deepest hell of the human passions are raked up burning embers to kindle the fires of strange and wild fanaticism. Heaven and earth are ransacked, and the arsenals of human learning are exhausted, to prop up the tottering fabric of infidelity. Heaven-daring impiety—hoary with age, and bold in crime—has transcended all its former limits. Every unguarded gate is entered, every unguarded fortress surprised. Who, then, shall withstand the wild rush of these tumultuous waters? How shall these deep-seated evils be removed—these mighty foes be slain—so that the kingdom of Christ may spread its dominion over the whole earth, unless ministers of the Gospel—Heaven's appointed instrumentality for the work—possess a firmness and stability that knows no yielding amid the warring elements that rage around them?

4. A fourth essential element in the character of an able minister is, that he should possess a critical and extensive acquaintance with the Word of God.

"Every scribe," said our Savior to his disciples, "which is instructed into the kingdom of heaven, is like unto a man that is an householder, which



bringeth forth out of his treasures things new and old." "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." Throughout the Bible, there is a mutual relation and dependence of parts, so that often one part can not be fully comprehended without being studied in connection with the whole. A neglect of this striking and important fact has been productive of the most pernicious consequences. It is thus that error has so often nestled under the very wings of the divine sanctuary, and heresy sought to ingraft itself upon the oracles of God.

An extensive and critical acquaintance with the Word of God may also, by implication, embrace a varied knowledge of language, literature, and science. This knowledge, though not absolutely indispensable, can not but be of great service in expounding the sacred Scriptures. The same remark will, in a special manner, apply to the literature of the Bible, embracing the history, manners, and customs, symbolical language, and rhetorical figures of Oriental nations. But the Bible itself, above all other books, should be the companion of the Christian minister. With its facts and principles should his mind be richly stored, its sacred images should kindle the fires of his genius, and at its altar should be warmed and nurtured the congenial sympathies of his soul. "The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God," is the weapon with which he must be armed. Like Apollos, he must be "mighty in the Scriptures." No shallow draughts can suffice the minister of Jesus Christ. He must be able to draw out the deep things of

God, to exhibit the great "mystery of godliness;" then will the weapons of his warfare be "mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds."

Nor is this so easy of attainment as some seem to imagine. The Bible is not like other books; *they* are the offspring of finite and limited intelligence, and are therefore subject to human comprehension in all their parts and adaptations. Their depths may be sounded, their boundaries defined. The mind may comprehend all that they contain, and even go beyond them in the comprehension of its knowledge. Not so with the Bible. You may study it, sound its known depths, admire its beauties, be impressed with its grandeur. Go over it again; new depths will be discovered, beauties more lovely will entrance your soul, and sublimities of more solemn and impressive grandeur will impress you with reverence and awe. The more you know of the Bible, the more will you be made to realize the depths of its "wisdom and knowledge" that are yet unsounded and unknown. Said Sir Isaac Newton—who looked abroad on the vast expanse of creation, brought new laws and new principles to light, and immeasurably enlarged the boundaries of human intelligence in the natural world—"To myself I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the sea-shore, now and then finding a smoother pebble, or a prettier shell than ordinary, while the great ocean of truth lay undiscovered before me." So will the profoundest intellect bow before the majesty and glory of the Divine Word. It bears the seal and impress of divinity; comprehending all that is past, it carries the thoughts

onward to all that is future ; given to mortals, it awakens the admiration, and challenges the intelligence of the archangel and the seraphim. Kindled like a beacon-light upon the shore of time, it throws its rays out over the ocean of eternity.

5. A fifth element in the character of an able minister of the New Testament is, that he must be *able* to expound God's Word with clearness, force, and effect.

The exposition of God's Word and the enforcement of divine truth are the legitimate work of the Christian minister. A man may be an able legislator, or a successful counselor, though his enunciation be poor, and his delivery be wanting in force. But the Christian minister must not only have clear views of divine truth, but be able to communicate them with a clearness and a dignity becoming subjects so profound and so awful. No mere flourish of language, no rude jokes, no mean panderings to the vulgar "catch-words" of the day, become the delivery of a message so high, or the functions of an office so noble.

" 'T is pitiful

To court a grin, when you should woo a soul ;

To break a jest, when pity should inspire

Pathetic exhortation ; and to address

The skittish fancy with facetious tales,

When sent with God's commission to the heart !"

What would be thought of the Chief Justice of the nation should he employ swelling bombast, airy verbosity, or vulgar witticisms in grave decisions on questions of constitutional law ? It would be contemptible—insufferable ; wholly unworthy the office,

the subject, and the occasion. What then shall we say of the pursuance of a like course on the part of Heaven's ambassador, while pronouncing the solemn decisions of eternal justice? How high, how God-like, we would exclaim, the theme! How unworthy, how immeasurably unworthy, the delivery! The importance of his theme, the dignity of his high commission—nay, the very honor of the Master that hath called him, demand of him the exercise of high and holy gifts. Against the employment of any thing besides this, every just sentiment of our moral nature revolts, and cries out in indignation—

“What! will a man play tricks—will he indulge  
• A silly, fond conceit of his fine form,  
And just proportion, and fashionable mien,  
And pretty face, in presence of his God?  
Or will he seek to dazzle me with tropes,  
As with the diamond on his lily hand,  
And play his brilliant parts before my eyes,  
When I am hungry for the bread of life?  
He mocks his Maker, prostitutes and shames  
His sacred office, and, instead of truth,  
Displaying his own beauty, starves his flock!”

While, on the one hand, we warn you against evils so inconsistent with the dignity and moral purity of the pulpit, if not with even sound and consistent personal piety; let us, on the other, also warn you against a disquisitive, abstract style, that will shut you out from the sympathies of the great mass of your hearers. The Christian minister is not called to speculate about abstract principles in the refinements of metaphysical philosophy, nor yet to dogmatize upon morals. He is to preach “Christ

crucified." He is to take Christ and present him to the hearts of the people, as well as to their understandings. No ornament, no trappings, no gaudy dress become a work so simple, and yet so sublime. It is this preaching Christ plainly, affectionately, and earnestly, that will best commend both the preacher and his subject to the people. This is a trait in which Massillon greatly excelled. It is said that after the delivery of one of his sermons, the audience were so impressed that "nobody stopped to criticise it. Each auditor returned in a pensive silence, with a thoughtful air, downcast eyes, and composed countenance, carrying away the arrow which the Christian orator had fastened in his breast." And even the French monarch, Louis XIV, paid him the distinguished compliment of acknowledging that, while other fine orators who preached in his chapel made him pleased with *them*, the sermons of Massillon made him *displeased* with *himself*. On one occasion, under the powerful strokes of his eloquence, the whole assembly, by an involuntary motion, started upon their feet, with exclamations of astonishment and wonder. Such is the earnestness, zeal, and power with which the Gospel of Christ should be preached. Do you exclaim, "Who is sufficient for these things?" Hear the language of the apostle, "Thanks be to God, which causeth us always to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savor of his knowledge by us in every place." Though you may not be eloquent in speech, nor graceful in delivery, yet you may preach Christ "in demonstration of the Spirit, and with power," and then will it be

“the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.”

6. A sixth element in the character of an able minister, and the last we shall mention, is, that he should possess a full conviction of the truth and living efficacy of that Gospel which he preaches.

He is called to defend and propagate, not a mere hypothesis, not a mere speculative notion, but absolute truth—truth that has the sanction and authority of eternal wisdom—truth whose living power has been attested by millions in all ages—truth that is the light of the world, to guide mortals up to heaven. This truth must have laid its foundations deep in the convictions of his own understanding. The Gospel, to him who ministers at its holy altar, must not be a mere matter of speculation, a creature of the imagination, a baseless sentimentalism ; it must be a living principle in the soul. Its vital energy must be diffused through the whole moral and intellectual frame, claiming the full assent of the reason, swaying all the passions of the heart, impregnating and purifying all the moral emotions, so that he may be able to say, “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of life,” we preach unto you.

Nothing short of this conviction will suffice the Christian minister. The graces of elocution, the flowers of rhetoric, the refined subtilties of logic, will never supply the wants of a famishing soul. Frothy declamation must give place to living facts ; the cold abstraction of a mere speculative faith must give place

to the hallowed sympathy of the Gospel, gushing up from the deep fountains of the heart. How deep and ardent was the conviction that glowed in the breast of the apostle, bursting forth in the eloquent, Godlike aspiration, "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow of heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen, according to the flesh." Such are some of the sublime, heaven-begotten emotions, that will thrill the soul of the Christian minister.

This conviction will arm him with boldness. It will enable him to say—"we are ambassadors of God"—we come commissioned by Heaven—"we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants, for Jesus' sake." "I had a vision," said the venerable Chrysostom; "I thought I saw the communion rails crowded with angels, listening to the sermon; when a man speaks as if in the sight of God, with an open heaven, with Christ and angels before him, he catches the true prophetic fire; he preaches a present salvation from a present Savior; the spirit of glory and grace descends, and the flame communicates to his auditory, and accompanies them to their homes."

This conviction is the moving principle that has led to the unparalleled labors, the noble sacrifices, and the martyr sufferings of the servants of Christ, in every age of the world. Do persecuting rulers "command them straitly not to speak in his name?" Regardless of them "that can only kill the body,"

they say, "We ought to obey God rather than men." Does the Holy Spirit witness that bonds and afflictions await them? Hear them exclaim with united voice, "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear." There is no land where monuments of Christian devotion, suffering, sacrifice, and love do not exist. They belong to every age and every clime; bright spots on a sin-polluted world, unseen by men but known to God.

This spirit of holy confidence and self-sacrifice was eminently a characteristic of the early Methodist preachers. They went out "without scrip or purse;" they heeded no danger, and shrunk from no labor; they forded streams, crossed mountains, traversed wildernesses—every-where preaching the Word of life, and striving "to spread Scriptural holiness over these lands." Nobly have they done their work! All succeeding ages will bear witness unto them! The results of their labors, how mighty! Their reward, how glorious! My brethren, "the fathers, where are they?" One by one they have ceased from their labors, and gone to their reward. The first generation of Methodist preachers has already ascended; we stand on the line that separates them from their successors—the past from the future. Like Elisha, we have seen them ascend in the chariot of Elijah. The cloud of heaven comes down between us, and they are hid from our view. Wondering and admiring, we exclaim, "My father, my father! the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof." Let us, too, catch their falling mantles, that the smitten waters of Jordan may divide before us, as



we lead on the sacramental host of God's elect to victory and glory.

II. Having thus endeavored to point out some of the characteristics of an able minister of the New Testament, we proceed now, briefly, to inquire how this character may be attained. Having pointed out the goal, it becomes us to inquire how we may run the race. Having learned to "covet earnestly the best gifts," we desire to know how they may be attained.

1. In the first place, let your minds be impressed with the dignity and importance of your office, and resolve upon a high standard of ministerial attainments.

So high a responsibility and so wide a range of contemplation comes within the sphere of no other vocation. It has relation to earth and heaven, to time and eternity. He who has not been impressed, overwhelmed with the importance and elevation of his sacred work, yet lacks the first element of all fitness and adaptation to it. It was under the pressure of this responsibility that an apostle, who had gone up into the third heavens, and been baptized with the inspiration of God, cried out, "Who is sufficient for these things?"

Labor is the price of excellence. It is so intellectually, morally, and spiritually. While God gives us the power and the means, and blesses the whole, he still requires us to "labor," to "strive" for the attainment of all high and holy gifts. The loveliest, purest, and holiest character ever attained by man, was not formed without watchfulness and toil. And, if holiness of heart, which lies so much within the

province of the Holy Spirit, be conditioned upon labor, how much more the attainment of a well-stored and cultivated mind! Determined effort must be coupled with high resolve. He that would excel as a minister of the New Testament, preach Christ with power and success, and make a lasting impression upon the moral features of the age, *must be a man of labor*. A man may rant, or talk prettily, and tell affecting tales, and make beautiful quotations, while yet he lacks entirely the elements of true greatness. The great reformers, those bright luminaries of the Church, were men of labor. Had not Luther been a man of labor, God had raised up some other and more worthy instrument to herald the Reformation. But amid his travels, conflicts, and public labors, he found time to write an astonishing amount, besides translating the whole Bible. Wesley and Adam Clarke have few, if any, equals in the laborious industry that characterized *and crowned* their lives. "To view their works, one would suppose their lives were spent in the study; to consider their labors and travels, he would suppose their lives spent upon the highway and in the pulpit; to think of their piety, he would suppose their lives had been spent in the closet."

He who would excel as a minister, must be judicious in the allotment, and diligent in the improvement of his time. It was a maxim of the Latins, that "no one reaches the summit of honor, unless he prudently use his time." This *prudent use of time*, rather than any extraordinary natural power, has been the secret of success, in a vast majority of instances,

among those who have been distinguished for extraordinary parts, and have accomplished extraordinary results. When Luther was asked how he had found time to translate the Bible, he said, "I did a little every day." The well-known habits of Wesley, with reference to the use of his time, are a striking characteristic of the man, and give us the key to his success. They tell us how, in addition to all his other labors, he wrote and prepared for the press more books than most men find time to read. I remember reading somewhere the description of a picture, representing a man at the base of a mountain, with his coat and hat upon the ground, delving into its sides with a pickax—above him the motto, "little by little." Let this be the motto of him who would excel as a minister of Christ. Slowly, and amid many discouragements, may the fabric rise; but its fair proportions will at length shine forth in the "workman that needeth not to be ashamed." O how many precious moments are wasted in "softness and needless self-indulgence," in frivolous pursuits, in idle conversation, in vague and useless reverie, which, if rightly improved, might tell upon the world's destiny and the Redeemer's glory! How many a noble and godlike statue might have adorned the gallery of the Church's honored ones, had not industry been wanting to perfect its proportions and polish its surface! Distant as may seem the summit here unveiled to your view, it is not inaccessible. He need never despair who possesses the energy of character to work out his own destiny. No extraneous circumstances can keep such a man down; he will surmount them

all. He may be a child of penury, cradled upon the barren rock, but, by the sole force of his own solitary genius, he will at length compel the homage of the Church and the world. The hero toils for fame, the scholar labors to inscribe his name on the tablet of immortality. How much nobler thy aim, O thou man of God!—thou art living for eternity, toiling for an immortal crown! Angels and men are witnesses how thou workest for thy God. Arise, gird thyself for the contest!

2. In the second place, endeavor to store your mind especially with that kind of knowledge which will be brought into requisition in the exercise of the ministerial office.

No one man can learn every thing. If he attempt it he will not only fail, but will neglect to learn many things which would be of special importance to him. Hence, a selection must be made, the area of research must be defined, and its boundaries fixed. The legitimate field of study that belongs to the ministerial profession is wide and far-reaching. It comprises almost every art and every science. Natural and revealed religion, what a comprehensive study! It carries us back to the antiquity of our race; it requires of us a knowledge of ancient arts, manners, customs, history, and religion; it encircles ancient geography, poetry, and language; the fields of intellectual and moral science; the wonders of the sky, as developed in the science of astronomy—of the earth, as developed in natural philosophy and its kindred sciences—of our own frames and natures, as made known in physiology—all lie within its scope. In a word, the

science of theology takes in the whole man, social, moral, and immortal ; it comprehends his whole history, past and future ; it raises our conceptions to the throne of the Eternal, and bids us study his attributes and laws. Such are some of the sublime themes that may enlarge the heart and exalt the powers of the Christian minister. But above all, the great work of redemption—whose mysteries “angels have desired to look into,” and which shall constitute “the science and the song of eternity”—will ever challenge his powers to sound its depths and to contemplate its glories. With these gigantic truths let him grapple ; they will enlarge the compass of his thought and deepen the piety of his heart.

3. In the third place, he who feels himself called by God to enter upon the work of the ministry, should avail himself of whatever helps his circumstances will admit to qualify himself for the duties of the sacred office.

This is neither the time nor the place to enter into a defense of theological education, nor yet of theological seminaries. It is, indeed, passing strange, that we will educate for almost every other department of life, and in almost every other science ; while men are expected, almost by intuition, or by inspiration, to become qualified for the ministerial office. To expect results, without the use of means, is impious presumption. We, as a Church, have been in fault on the subject of the theological seminaries, and it is time that we made the confession of that fault. Not that we erred in not having them—to us they were unnecessary—but the error was in condemning

them in too broad and general terms. Others needed them then ; we need them now. And as true as the want exists, so true is it that there will be a supply. It is idle, then, to argue the question ; necessity is stronger than argument ; facts are more potent than reasoning. The time has come when we must have, not an educated ministry, but educated ministers ; and their number must and will increase, according to the condition and wants of the Church. Methodism will not be true to itself if this shall not be the case. A rapidly progressive improvement is going on in the intelligence and social elevation of our membership. The ministry must keep pace with the Church, or it will be a clog and a hinderance. The fact that many of our most learned, talented, and influential men have risen to their high standing without these extraneous helps, furnishes no argument against our position. They are the exception, and not the rule. And it is a most significant fact, that no class of ministers take a deeper interest, or feel a more hallowed sympathy, in the cause of ministerial education, than this very class. To educate our people generally, and not our ministry especially, would be gross absurdity. A more effective way of driving from our communion the intelligent, especially of our young people, could not be devised. Such a policy would be suicidal to the Church ; it would rob Methodism of the harvest for which she has so long and so faithfully toiled. Croakers may become shrill from hoarseness, and anti-progressive men may stand in the way to resist the tide of improvement, but the torrent will sweep around them

and over them ; and, when they are buried and lost beneath its waters, the Church will still be moving onward with gigantic strides to fulfill her glorious destiny.

4. Again, he that would attain the character of an "able minister of the New Testament" should neglect no preparation that can give efficacy and success to his pulpit ministrations.

Without entering into the question, how far a man should commit his thoughts to paper, or into a discussion of the advantages of extemporaneous discourse, we will only say, in general terms, that every subject should be *thoroughly studied*. It should be comprehended in all its relations and bearings. All its details should be familiar and fresh in the mind. It will then matter very little whether a man have a manuscript before him. He will need no crutch to lean upon. His sentences may sometimes lack polish, but they will have power. His thoughts will gush up from the soul with all the warmth and vigor of recent life. A habit of thorough preparation for the pulpit will react upon the whole intellectual character. It will beget habits of close thought and reflection ; it will give keenness and intensity to the desire of knowledge, and insensibly lead the man out into the investigation of whatever useful knowledge is connected with the subject of his ministry.

The graces of a chaste elocution and delivery are also worthy of attention. It is often said, and that too with some degree of justness, "manner is as important as matter." Some of the most admired and useful Christian orators have been greatly

indebted to the charms and power of their delivery. The impassioned utterance of a Whitefield rendered matter that was absolutely puerile when afterward published, overwhelming to his auditories. Summerfield, too—who has not heard of the transcendent power of his eloquence!—and yet, what judicious friend has not regretted that his fair fame should be darkened by the publication of discourses which were destined only to disappoint the expectations which the living fire and genius of his oratory had enkindled? The study of elocution occupied the mind of Demosthenes for years; and even Mr. Wesley has prescribed rules for the modulation of the voice, and for producing an effective delivery.

Another important feature of a just preparation for the pulpit is, that the mind should not only be rendered familiar with all the details, but the heart also warmed with the subject of the discourse. No one should undertake a subject in the sacred desk which he does not deem of sufficient importance to awaken the sympathies of his heart; and, when the heart is once touched, the intellect will be quickened, and all its energies inspired.

5. Again, he that would be an able minister must continually bear in remembrance his dependence upon God, and ever seek communion with him, and help from him by meditation and prayer.

On one occasion, we are told that our Savior “went out into a mountain, and continued all night in prayer to God.” Do you inquire “What weighty objects of his mission then weighed upon the Son of God?” In the acts of the next morning you have



the answer. "And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples, and of them he chose twelve," whom he ordained and sent forth into the work of the ministry. The Christian ministry, my brethren, was instituted under the hallowed influence of prayer: prayer is the very element in which it was consecrated; and prayer is the element in which it should live, and move, and speak. It is prayer that gives soul and energy, life and power, to the preached Word. The most eminent and successful ministers have uniformly been men of faith and prayer. Such were Fletcher and Payson, Baxter and Brainerd. Without this, God rarely gives success in the conversion of souls. We have seen some men, of but ordinary talents, and limited research, and poor elocution, who, nevertheless, were eminently successful in winning souls to Christ. What, then, was the secret of their success? It is found in the simple fact, that they were men of faith and prayer. Should those of a superior order of gift and attainment possess equal faith and prayer, how glorious might be the result! Important and indispensable as are study and intellectual attainments, and effective as are the graces of oratory, prayer is still more indispensable to the minister of Jesus Christ; and he who does not habitually and constantly avail himself of this source of spiritual and mental illumination, has widely mistaken the pillar of his strength. The intellect, as well as the soul, must be baptized and quickened with the celestial fire.

6. Finally, let him who would become an able minister of the New Testament, keep steadily in

view the great objects and ends of the Christian ministry.

How unworthy the motive of him who engages in the solemn duties of his vocation, with no higher aim than the applause of men, or the gain of the world! who blows the Gospel trump at the call of Mammon, and pays homage at the shrine of popularity! The self-sacrificing, godlike spirit of the Christian minister he can never know; the holy sympathy and the heart-felt interest in the flock of Christ, that is felt by the true shepherd, he can never feel; for he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep. The object that should arm the Christian minister with vigor in his holy calling should be the salvation of souls and the glory of his God. The hope that should animate him in the midst of toil, privation, and death, should be that of shining in the kingdom of heaven, with the brightness of the firmament, forever and ever.

We can not better conclude our remarks than by applying to ourselves the beautiful criticism made by Longinus upon the speaking of Cicero and Demosthenes. He says, the people would go from one of Cicero's orations, exclaiming, "What a beautiful speaker! what a rich, fine voice! what an eloquent man Cicero is!" *They talked of Cicero*; but when they left Demosthenes, they said, "*Let us fight Philip!*" Losing sight of the speaker, they were all absorbed in the subject; they thought not of Demosthenes, but of their country. So, my brethren, let us endeavor to send away from our ministrations the Christian, with his mouth full of the praises—

not of "our preacher," but of God ; and the sinner— not descanting upon the beautiful figures, and well-turned periods of the discourse, but inquiring, "What shall I do to be saved?" So shall we be blessed in our work ; and when called to leave the watch-towers of our spiritual Jerusalem, through the vast serene, like the deep melody of an angel song, Heaven's approving voice shall be heard—

"Servant of God, well done !  
Thy glorious warfare 's past ;  
The battle 's fought, the race is run,  
And thou art crowned at last."

THE END.

